A Good Neighbor

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/27135457.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter/Nigel (Charlie Countryman)
Characters:	Beverly Katz, Mrs. Komeda (Hannibal), Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Adam Towers, Jean Duran (LeChiffre)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Creatures & Monsters, Human/Vampire Relationship, Vampire Bites, Vampire Sex, Werewolves, Witches, Mating Bites, Mating Rituals, murder fluff, Mutual Pining, True Mates, Alternate Universe - Neighbors, Masturbation, POV Alternating, Murder
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of There Goes the Neighborhood
Collections:	Murder_husbands
Stats:	Published: 2020-10-21 Completed: 2021-12-29 Words: 28,225 Chapters: 13/13

A Good Neighbor

by slashyrogue

Summary

When a vampire moves in next door to Will Graham, the entire block is buzzing with excitement. Will doesn't expect to have much contact with his new neighbor Hannibal at all, but after having to apologize for accidentally declaring his intentions to court him he's suddenly yearning for something he didn't realize he always wanted.

Chapter 1

“So....there’s a vampire next door.”

Will looked up from the pan as he cooked. “Yeah. He just moved in last night.”

Bev sighed. “I’ve always wanted to meet one, you know? I’ve seen them on the street but get too scared to strike up a conversation. How do you even do that? I mean....”

“He’s a person, Bev,” Will mumbled, flipping the burgers, “Yeah he’s a different type of person but...”

“A sexy vampire person.”

“How do you know he’s sexy?”

“Cuz I saw a mountain of food on his porch. I figure all the desperate people on the block are trying to woo him.”

Will scoffed. “Seriously?”

She nodded. “It’s out there now. They were probably waiting till dark.”

He stuck their burgers in the buns and handed her a plate before he walked over to peer out the window. There on his new neighbor’s porch was a pile of what he assumed were ‘blood recipes.’

“He probably doesn’t even eat food he hasn’t cooked himself.”

“Do they even eat food?”

Will looked over his shoulder at her. “Of course they do. They just have to ingest blood every day in order to....”

Bev smirked. “And why do you know this?”

“Because I read?”

She shook her head. “Nuh uh. You looked it up, didn’t you?”

Will took a bite of his food and hated the blush that came to his face.

“No.”

“Will has a crush on the vampire!”

“I haven’t even seen what he looks like! How can I...”

There was a knock at his door and they both looked at each other.

“Who is that?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t have any friends,” Bev said, “Oh god, what if....?”

He rolled his eyes and opened the door without taking a peek. The man on the other side was pale, well dressed, and holding a measuring cup. He smiled at Will. “Hello, I just moved in and seem to have forgotten to buy milk. Would you be able to spare a cup? I have an event I’m making a cake for and there is very little time to go to the grocery store.”

Will blinked. “Um....yeah. You wanna come in?”

The vampire smiled. “You do realize that inviting me in automatically allows me entrance at any given time from now on.”

He smiled. “Yeah, I do.”

“Most humans would be frightened of the possibility that I may come in while they slept and kill them.”

“Then I better make the most of it.”

He held out his hand and the vampire shook it slowly. His skin wasn’t icy cold but still cool to the touch, and when they let go he surveyed Will with obvious interest.

“Hannibal Lecter.”

“Will Graham.”

There was a cough and Will looked over at Bev whose grin was the very definition of smug. “I see you’re entertaining,” Hannibal said, “I will come another time.”

“No!” Will said, eyes wide as he grabbed Hannibal’s arm, “She’s not....she’s just…”

Bev stood up and came to the door. “She is a platonic friend who was just leaving,” she said.

“Bev…”

She stepped through the doorway and held out her hand. “Beverly Katz.”

Hannibal shook her hand. “Dr. Hannibal Lecter.”

“A vampire doctor? That’s a new one.”

“I do not work in blood, only mending the mind.”

Bev looked at Will. “A shrink? Well, well. This should be interesting. Call me tomorrow.”

She stuck her tongue out behind Hannibal's back and fanned herself. Will blushed. "I will."

"It was nice meeting you, Dr. Lecter."

"You as well," Hannibal said, turning to nod at her.

The minute she was gone Will stepped out of the way. "Come in."

Hannibal stepped inside and he closed the door.

"Very nice home you have, Will."

"Not especially," Will mumbled, heading toward the refrigerator.

"You don't like it?"

He took the milk out.

"It wasn't my first choice but some stuff happened and here I am."

Hannibal was standing by the counter when he turned, a little too close, and Will hated the blush that came to his cheeks. "Lucky me."

He took the measuring cup from him. "Um...how much did you need?"

"One cup."

Will smiled as he poured. "What kind of cake?"

"Blood Orange," Hannibal murmured, moving in closer again.

"Not a typical event then?"

"No, it's...an event for other supernatural creatures in the area. I was turned onto it by one of our neighbors, a Ms. Durand. I thought I would bring out my best for my first."

Will paused in pouring. "Michelle Durand?"

"Yes."

He sighed. "You don't want to go to that."

"Excuse me?"

"Michelle is a….mon….um….she likes to..."

"Yes?"

"She has a *thing* for supernatural...people."

"She regularly has sex with supernatural creatures?"

“Yeah. If she invited you somewhere it’s probably not to meet other...beings like you. It’ll probably be filled with humans looking to have sex with mon...people like you.”

Hannibal put his hand on the milk jug. “You can say monster, Will. I won’t be offended.”

“I will be,” Will mumbled, taking the jug of milk and turning to put it away, “I don’t see vampires and werewolves as monsters. I mean, not all of them.”

“Is that so?”

“Yeah, I mean,” he sighed, leaning against the fridge, “Not everyone that’s different is a monster. Even if they drink blood, or eat human meat. It’s just what they have to do.”

Hannibal licked his lips. “That is a very progressive way of thinking. What is it that you do for a living, Will?”

“I was a teacher.”

“Teaching wouldn’t put you in the crosshairs of the monster loving human community.”

“No,” he smiled, “But I used to teach behavioral science at the FBI academy and consulted on a number of murder cases. I’ve seen and dealt with many different types of people.”

“And many different types of crimes.”

“That’s why I don’t do that anymore.”

“What do you do now?”

“I work at an animal shelter.”

Hannibal leaned on the counter and Will moved to sit on a stool. “Yet I see no pets.”

“No, I...I had some problems that took me out here so I’m not sure I’m ready for that yet.”

“But you like pets?”

“Oh yeah,” Will leaned on his hand, “I like dogs.”

He moved back when Hannibal came in close to him. “May I?”

“What are you...?”

Hannibal brushed his fingers across Will’s cheek. “You had an errant eyelash.”

Will felt his blush deepen. “Thanks.”

“You’re welcome.”

He felt his heart beating faster and hated that Bev was going to be smug as hell when he told her how this went.

“So now that you’re not going to that party, are you still gonna make the recipe?”

He watched Hannibal’s face fall. “I suppose it’s not important now.”

“I’m sure there are…”

Hannibal shook his head. “I was going to meet like other creatures like myself, Will. There are a number of other ways to do so but I will admit I hoped to find a companion for the evening.”

Will stepped off the stool and turned around to hide his blush. “I’m sure there’s a lot of other m...creatures around here. Or you could go to the party and just pick up the first m...creature lover on the block. Judging by the amount of food on your porch you’d have your pick.”

He was startled when Hannibal touched his shoulder and turned in time to see a hint of fang when he smiled again. “I have no want of that type of companion. Thank you, Will. I will perhaps make something else this evening but you helped me greatly. It was nice to meet you.”

Hannibal held out his hand and he shook it, the coolness of his skin still just warm enough.

“You too.”

“I promise I will not kill you tonight.”

Will was startled and then burst out laughing. “I appreciate it.”

He walked him to the door and back outside again. The cool February air made him shiver.

“Goodnight, Hannibal.”

“Goodnight.”

Will watched him walk away and felt a shiver of a different sort when Hannibal turned to lock eyes with him. They shared another smile and when he closed the door that night Will felt oddly warm.

Thoughts of Hannibal lingered for the rest of the night, even after he got done sharing what had happened with Bev who still insisted he needed to “climb that bloodsucker like a tree.” When he went to bed Will couldn’t help but think of what it would be like to share a bed with a vampire, and soon his mind conjured up images that made his body desperate for release. He stroked himself with his eyes closed, imagining Hannibal’s cool hands, and when he came it was with a shout as imaginary Hannibal bit into his neck.

The rest of his dreams were filled with the two of them writhing with ecstacy, so much so that when he woke he realized he’d come in his boxer briefs.

“Shit.”

This wasn’t like him.

Will wasn’t exactly a virgin but he’d had so little bed partners the last few years he’d pretty much lost all interest. His own fractured mind from years of work in murder and blood had

left him worried that if he got close to someone again he might not be able to hold himself back.

Now after less than a few minutes with a vampire his body seemed ready for something he was sure Hannibal had no interest in. The man had himself said last night he had been hoping to find a companion of the creature variety and when Will had told him of the monster fucker party he'd decided not to go.

Will sighed.

Apparently he was going to have to keep his fantasies to himself and try not to jizz his pants the next time he saw Hannibal. Though memories of the dreams he'd had last night might make that next to impossible.

He dragged himself out of bed to shower and forced out any errant thoughts that might lead him into jerking off again. The weekend was here, yes, but he didn't plan on spending it desperately touching himself to thoughts of a man he barely knew.

Will was dressed and ready when he peeked outside.

There was snow on the ground, at least three inches, and he groaned at the thought of shoveling.

He really needed to get a snowblower.

The shovel he had was the best there was made, SnowThrower3000, but still the ache after wasn't worth the savings.

He ate breakfast and readied himself to go outside: hat, gloves, scarf, and thick coat. Then for the next seventy five minutes he shoveled out his driveway, sidewalk, and front steps. He was just about ready to go back in when he paused.

Hannibal's driveway was just as full as his, perhaps even more so, and he knew the vampire wouldn't be able to come out again till dark. The snow could freeze by then and even a snow blower would have trouble picking it up.

He sighed and walked back down his front steps.

It wouldn't take him too long to do Hannibal's yard too.

Another hour passed before he finished, exhausted, and trudged back inside with red cheeks and ears. He took another hot shower, sighing, and then turned on Animal Planet.

He fell asleep about ten minutes into "The Vet Life," and woke up to someone knocking at his door.

Will groaned and rolled off the couch, dragging his feet.

He opened the door only to see Mrs. Komeda on the other side.

The older woman lived across the street and had never been Will's biggest fan.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Will rubbed his eyes. "What?"

"Everyone saw what you did," she hissed, putting her hands on her hips, "Do you really think a man like that, a proper perfect gentleman of a vampire, would want YOU?"

He blinked. "What are you talking about?"

Mrs. Komeda huffed. “You had better watch yourself, Mr. Graham. There are plenty of people on this block who would make a fine match for Dr. Lecter. *You* are not one of them.”

And with that she stomped off, not bothering to look back, and leaving Will more confused than ever.

He closed the door and was just about to go back to his nap when his cell phone rang.

“Yeah?”

“You busy?” Bev asked, “I really want to get one of those big snow blowers and I’m not sure…”

“No, I just woke up,” he mumbled, “And also just got yelled at by Mrs. Komeda.”

Bev paused. “Why?”

“She said something about me not being a match for Hannibal. Like I was saying I was or something. And she said something about seeing what I did. I didn’t do anything.”

“Then why would she say she saw you do something? What have you done today?”

“I woke up, shoveled my front walk and driveway and then did Hannibal’s before I fell back to sleep.”

The silence on the other end of the line made Will worried.

“Bev?”

“I’m coming over.”

And with that she hung up.

Bev lived only a few houses down from him so it wouldn’t take long, but Will was oddly worried now.

What had he done?

A few minutes later her loud knocking got him back off the couch, and when he opened the door to her huge smile Will was even more worried.

“Why are you smiling?”

Bev pushed past him. “You have no idea what you did, do you?”

He closed the door behind her and hated the way his heart beat faster. “I didn’t DO anything!”

She pulled out her phone and typed something, scrolling for a second before handing it to him.

Vampire Mating Rituals

Showing your intent

Offers of intent can be the following:

Blood sacrifices

Gifts of blood

Displays of desire

Protection promises

A large part of vampire mating rituals are blood related but among the tamest is an offer of intent. Vampires are, of course, looking for a mate who they're attracted to but also one who will protect them when they're at their most vulnerable.

Protection promises are quite sacred to vampires, especially from humans, and can lead directly into courting without much preamble.

Will looked up from the phone. "I don't understand."

"Why did you shovel his driveway, sidewalk, and stairs?"

"I didn't want him to have to do it tonight when he might…"

"Might what? Hurt himself? Will he can probably lift a thousand pounds. A little ice wouldn't have bothered him. The fact that you thought it would...is adorable."

Will blushed and pushed the phone at her as he headed for the kitchen. "Shut up."

He pulled out a box of cereal and started to pour it into a bowl. "I was being a good neighbor."

"A good neighbor who thinks he's sexy," Bev laughed, "A good neighbor who wanted to *protect* him."

He froze and turned around slowly. “No.”

“ *Yes* ,” she grinned, “You have most definitely shown a sign of intent to your vampire neighbor. He’s going to wake up thinking you want to court him and I think it’s the cutest thing that is going to piss off the entire block.”

Will shook his head. “I was just being nice! I can put the snow back!”

He headed for the door and she grabbed his arm. “Will, stop. It’s fine. You can just tell him it was a mistake. I’m sure he’d get a laugh out of it.”

He sighed. “I guess. I mean, he even pretty much said to me last night that he isn’t looking for a human.”

Bev’s eyebrow raised. “How did that come up in conversation?”

Will blushed. “He got invited to one of Michelle’s monster fucker parties and I explained to him that he probably didn’t want to go. He didn’t go.”

“And that means he’s not into humans?”

“Well, yeah.”

Bev pulled out her phone again and scrolled a little before handing it back to him.

Most people are unaware that while vampires are not always against other monsters they rarely mate with them. The vulnerability in being a vampire is so that they almost always choose someone who can provide three basic vampire needs: warm blood, warm body, and daylight protection. This tends to lead them toward any creatures other than vampires: werewolves, merfolk, and of course their most favorite: humans.

Will looked up slowly. “That doesn’t mean he is into humans. He might ....”

“Will.”

“There are merfolk who live at least an hour from here and Mr. Tenneson who runs the bait shop is a were! There….”

She put her hand on his shoulder.

“Did he touch you when he was here?”

Will looked down. “I’m not sure.”

“Will.”

“Fine,” he huffed, looking at her again, “He flicked an eyelash off my cheek.”

Bev grinned. “And you thought that was normal for a stranger you just met a few minutes before that to do?”

His cheeks were burning now and Will closed his eyes. “No.”

She kissed his cheek. “All that reading and you didn’t even bother to go to the mating rituals sections. Next time be more thorough, sweetie.”

Will pushed her back and she laughed.

“I hate you.”

“No, you don’t. You love me so much you’re gonna go with me to Home Depot and help me pick out a snowblower.”

He sighed. “Yeah I am.”

“And on the way I’ll read to you about mating dances.”

Will threw a spoon at her before he headed for his bedroom.

Chapter 2

When Hannibal moved to Wolf Trap he hadn't expected it to change his life very much at the beginning.

His work would still be the same, though he knew the lure of a "vampire psychiatrist" would bring in those who were intrigued or hoped to entice him.

He hadn't expected this.

His perfect shoveled front walk, driveway, and stairs outside made him oddly excited.

Offers of intent had never been something he was short on, even back in Lithuania, but he immediately hoped this one was true and from one person in particular.

Will Graham.

He saw a snow shovel sitting outside Will's home, obviously used, and the warmth in that made him smile.

Their meeting last night had been a fortuitous one that led to many shared dreams while he'd slept.

He could still remember the way Will had felt in his mind's eye.

Would he be just as warm in reality?

Hannibal spent the next hour readying himself for meeting Will, dressing as fetching as he could possibly manage, and when he was ready to head out he opened the door only to see the man in question on his steps.

“I was just---”

“Please, come in,” he said, feeling oddly nervous.

He hadn’t even thought of his own intent gesture yet but his mind raced as he led Will inside.

“I was just coming over to---”

“I just wanted to--”

They both laughed.

Will ran a hand over the back of his head and looked down sheepishly. “God this is awkward.”

Hannibal reached out to touch his cheek. “It doesn’t have to be.”

The look in Will’s eyes confused him but the way his heart beat faster and cheeks grew pink did not.

“Hannibal…”

“Yes?”

“I...I just wanted to apologize.”

Hannibal paused. “Why?”

Will stepped away from him. “I didn’t know about the mating intent thing. Bev told me after Mrs. Komeda practically yelled at me that I wasn’t good enough for you.”

Hannibal felt his chest ache. “I see.”

“I just wanted to be sure you could get out of your driveway tonight for work and---”

He turned away, hating how the ache seemed to spread, and did not look into Will’s eyes.

“It’s perfectly alright, Will. Thank you for telling me before things grew awkward.”

Will sighed. “They...I mean...you...it’s not anything against you.”

Hannibal smiled. “No need to flatter me, Will.”

“I’m not trying to flatter you, you’re a really---”

“It was an honest mistake, Will. Do not worry yourself that I’m upset by it.”

Will still seemed quite upset and he could hear his blood flowing fast. The pink tint to his cheeks was quite lovely though it made Hannibal rather sad at the cause. “Okay.”

“Thank you for coming by to clear up the confusion.”

He watched Will's shoulders slump as he nodded. "You're welcome."

"And thank you for shoveling my walk. I do not have appointments this evening but it's quite nice to not have to worry before I go out."

"I was just...being a good neighbor."

"I'm lucky to have such a good neighbor as you. Have a pleasant evening."

Will nodded. "Yeah...uh...you too."

Hannibal leaned against the door after he shut Will outside, digging his claws into the hard wood as he tried to calm his upset.

Will may have been interested in the sexual dreams they had shared last night but had no interest in being his mate. Perhaps Hannibal had in some way influenced his thoughts though he didn't remember doing such a thing.

He sighed and went to the kitchen, fangs heavy in his mouth.

The container of blood in the refrigerator seemed to call to him and he ripped it open, swallowing much as he tried to curb the rejection. He cared not that his clothes began to get wet, nor did he mind the floor, and when he looked down to see the mess he closed his eyes.

"This means nothing."

His move to the states had been for a fresh start, letting go of his sadness after losing what remained of his family, and he needed to continue on that path.

There were plenty of supernatural creatures he could find company with and perhaps down the line he'd feel a connection to someone as strong as his immediate one to Will Graham.

Hannibal opened his eyes and went to get supplies in order to clean up his mess. The cleaning would take his mind off Will's rejection, and perhaps once he'd showered, finding someone else to occupy his evening would not be a terrible idea.

He hated the waste of blood as he mopped up the remains of Mr. Anderson, a census taker who had been quite rude to him at a truck stop not forty miles from here. The man had sneered at the sight of Hannibal's fangs and made derogatory remarks about vampires under his breath as if Hannibal could not hear him.

Mr. Anderson had been quite easy to catch, and even easier to drain.

Hannibal had given him to a very helpful werewolf he'd met alongside the road not two miles after.

The supernatural community was vast and always saw fit to share with each other.

Now all he had to do was find those closest to him.

The bloodied rags he threw into the washing machine along with his own clothes before he walked naked down to the bathroom. Warm water rarely had much effect on him but he closed his eyes, pretending the splashes of warmth were Will's fingers along his skin.

It was foolish to fantasize, and a bit selfish, but the ache seemed to subside as it was replaced with lust. Hannibal growled, pressing his forehead against the cool tile wall, and began to stroke his hardness.

"Will…."

His fixation on this one human so quickly was rather frightening in its intensity, but he could not make himself stop.

Hannibal bit his lip as he felt the rush of his orgasm, blood dripping down his chin even as the warm water washed it away, and kept his eyes closed for far too long after.

“Fool.”

He let the water wash away his passionate remains and finished his shower in somber silence.

The act of readying himself for the evening was another way to ignore his upset, and by the time he was finished Hannibal looked even better than he had for Will earlier.

It would not be hard to find someone to take his mind off of this.

The clock read nearly seven p.m. when he left the house, and the drive away from temptation made him a bit more calm. He would get past this and perhaps still find a way to be friendly with Will. Hannibal did not want to lose any connection he may be able to have with him.

He drove for what felt like ages, though it was only nine when he spotted something interesting.

A bar with lights on low and a lit moon in the window.

Moon symbols were a sign of supernatural friendly establishments, mostly owned by werewolves, and as he pulled into the parking lot Hannibal saw quite a few cars with the same symbol in their windows.

He did not think it was wise to advertise on your vehicle, but to each their own.

The smell of werewolf blood and others hit him immediately when he stepped inside the bar. There were quite a few patrons inside but all of them stopped talking when he arrived.

Hannibal nodded once and headed for the bar.

The werewolf bartender flashed his canines at Hannibal as he came over to serve him.

“What’ll it be?”

“A Bloody Mary.”

The werewolf, whose name tag read Nigel, smiled as he dropped down a twenty.

“Good choice, Fangs.”

Hannibal looked at the others around him, the scent of them strong enough he could pick out each type with ease. There was another vampire sitting in the far back at a table with a young obviously human man in his lap and a scar on his eye who stared at Hannibal with distrust.

Nigel set Hannibal’s drink in front of him and he held it out to the other vampire. The man did the same and went back to his companion.

“We don’t get many of you fangies around here.”

He took a sip of his drink, eyeing up the were, and set it down slowly. “Yet you keep fresh blood on hand.”

“You’re not the only one who likes the taste,” Nigel grinned.

“I suppose.”

“New in the area?”

“What makes you think that?”

“I know just about everyone who comes in here,” Nigel said, wiping down the counter, “And like I said...fangies don’t come in often. Just... *him* .”

He watched Nigel’s lip curl as he looked over him at the vampire in the far back table.

“I was under the impression most supernaturals were friendly with one another.”

“Assholes are assholes,” Nigel growled, his eyes flashing once before he turned, “And *that fucker* is an asshole.”

Hannibal didn’t bother to turn but he could smell blood from the human in the vampire’s arms. His immediate thought went to Will and he sighed, slumping a bit on the bar.

“Humans come in here all the time,” Nigel said, “You don’t have to look so fucking sad about Duran biting into that twink.”

He ignored him and downed the rest of his drink in one quick gulp. “That is not my problem.”

“Or you could always try the witch. He likes fangies.”

Nigel gestured to the man sitting at the table behind him whose eyes glowed just once as he smiled. Hannibal licked his lips and flashed teeth which made the man crook his finger. He had brown curls, teal eyes, and reminded him of Will.

“Excuse me.”

Hannibal got up and went to the man’s table. “Is this seat taken?”

“It will be in a minute, love,” the man said, grinning, “When you sit down.”

He sat down across from him and could hear not even a heartbeat from his new companion.

“Glamour?”

“Of course,” he said, taking a sip of something pink, “Most of you monsters like fear so it’s best to hide anything that shows it. What’s your name, Darling?”

“I don’t see a need for names.”

The witch smiled. “I bet I can guess everything about you, Mr. Vampire, even without your name.”

“Whyever would you need to do that?”

“For fun.”

Hannibal reached across the table to take the witch’s hand and felt eyes on him from behind. The other vampire was watching them. “Friend of yours?”

The witch's eyes darkened.

"Someone who didn't like what I could figure out about him but wanted to know everything about me."

"I see."

He turned Hannibal's hand over and ran his fingers across the lines. "Oh….you have someone."

"No, I am not---"

"You do," the witch said, his soft fingers making Hannibal's skin feel strange, "But he doesn't know just how important he is, does he? The poor thing."

Hannibal attempted to take his hand back but found he could not. "Let go of me."

"No," the witch smiled, "I don't think I will. But I won't fuck you either, Mr. Vampire. I don't like to mess with monsters like you. Pining is just so bloody adorable to watch and…." he pricked Hannibal's skin with his fingernail and the blood ran down his hand, "...now I get to watch."

He hissed. "LET GO!"

The witch let him go and he fell back, snarling as he stood. He went to leap for the witch but someone grabbed him around the neck hard.

"You touch him and you die."

“Aww, *Jean* ,” the witch grinned, “You do still care.”

Hannibal growled, his fangs heavy in his mouth. “He accosted me.”

“He bled you so he can scry,” the vampire, Jean, said.

“I did not give permission to watch my life.”

“He doesn’t need it.”

The witch stood and came around the table to Hannibal. He put his hand on Hannibal’s wound and the burning made him growl again.

“Are you that private, Hannibal?” The witch asked.

“Yes.”

He watched the wound vanish before his eyes.

“Pity,” he sighed, “Most fangy blokes like to be watched. But even I can’t stand in the way of a true mating.”

“I am not—“

The witch reached out and smiled as he touched his cheek.

“My mistake,” he whispered, his eyes flashing once before he looked to Jean, “You finished with your fun?”

“Yes.”

“Let’s go then.”

Hannibal was let go instantly and his mind felt muddled as he watched them leave. He couldn’t quite remember why he’d been held in the first place.

“Here,” Nigel said, handing him another drink, “Drink this. Sorry I got you mixed up with that fucker. I thought he and the witch were through.”

“What witch?”

Nigel grinned. “Nevermind. You up for some fun, Fangs?”

Hannibal eyed him with suspicion. “I thought you did not like vampires.”

He grabbed Hannibal’s tie and twisted it around his fist.

“I don’t like Duran,” Nigel said, “But you….smell just fine.”

Hannibal’s fangs felt heavy in his mouth. “You are no longer needed at the bar?”

“Nope,” Nigel grinned, “Shift ended just now.”

He sat down, still dazed, and took a sip of his new drink.

“Blood wine?”

“The best vintage mixed with the newest,” Nigel said, letting go of his tie to sit down across from him.

“If I were interested….there would have to be some discussion ahead of time so there’s no confusion.”

Nigel leaned back against the booth and folded hands behind his head. “Of course.”

“You’re against biting I assume.”

“A little intimate for a quick fuck, isn’t it?”

“Sometimes biting someone’s neck isn’t about intimacy. It can be an act of domination depending on the partner.”

Nigel’s eyes flashed at him yellow as he licked his fangs. “I‘m not against a little nip and fuck. Claws?”

“It’s highly doubtful you’re referring to mine but I would prefer not to be scratched by a stranger. The wound would take longer to heal and require a bit too much fresh blood intake.”

“So what do I get out of this, then?”

“My penis and fangs inside you.”

Nigel laughed, throwing back his head. Hannibal admired his neck and wished he could hear the rush of Nigel's blood pumping.

"I like you, Fangs," he grinned, pulling out a cigarette that he put into his mouth, "You're my kind of asshole. So many of these fangies think they're hot fucks without even showing off why. You…."

"I'm well aware of my sexual prowess, Nigel. I don't need to take the time to finesse when it's nothing more than a one time occurrence. You and I both know what we want out of this."

He watched Nigel take a long drag of his cigarette and admired his neck again as he blew out the smoke. "That's just the way I like it. A quick little nip and fuck. I haven't had a decent dick in ages."

Hannibal said nothing as he watched him slide out of the booth and stretch his neck out again as he stood. He held out of his hand for Hannibal to take.

"I'm not sure how comfortable I am with you coming to my home."

Nigel put his offered hand down on the table and leaned in so close Hannibal could almost taste his blood in the air. "I'm quite harmless, Fangs. I promise."

It had been approximately sixteen days since he'd last had sexual intercourse with anyone, and the temptation was what won out over his sense.

"You'll leave after," he murmured, coming out of the booth, "And forget you ever even met me."

“Of course,” Nigel said, walking in step beside him, “This is a nip and fuck, Fangs. Nothing more.”

“Hannibal,” he said, not looking at him as they walked through the doors, “If you’re going to be yelling out something while we’re in bed together, I’d prefer it to be my name instead of….”

Nigel turned him against the brick of the building when they got outside and leaned in to sniff at Hannibal’s neck. “I quite like Fangs, Darling….and I’m sure soon you’ll like it too.”

Hannibal watched Nigel’s eyes flash yellow and grabbed the back of his neck, pulling him in for a kiss that awakened the lust he needed to curb his upset. Nigel was warm, eager, and his blood smelled rather nice despite the wolf stench.

They broke their kiss both panting, Nigel’s eyes now fully lit, and Hannibal ran a finger down his cheek. “Follow me.”

He got into his car and watched Nigel head off toward a waiting motorcycle. It was still quite early when he pulled his car out of the lot, a bit too early to combat prying eyes in the neighborhood that seemed far too interested in him, but his eagerness superseded his care.

Let them look. He had no desire to start any sort of relationship with his neighbors other than the friendship with Will. They were all far too interested in what he could do to them rather than him as a person.

Hannibal had no desire to be a novelty in someone’s bed.

He wanted a mate.

The drive back seemed quicker than it had taken to get to the bar, and as he pulled into his freshly shoveled driveway he paused as Nigel pulled alongside him.

There would no doubt be talk of his visitor come morning, he knew that, and perhaps that was why he'd allowed him to be here at all.

A light tap on the window pulled Hannibal out of his thoughts and he exited the car to see Nigel leaning against the other side.

"Nice little neighborhood," Nigel said, taking out another cigarette, "There's about five different humans staring at us right now."

Hannibal came around the car and stood in front of him. "I'm aware."

"Is that why you brought me here? To make someone jealous? The guy the witch was yammering about?"

"You keep mentioning a witch," Hannibal sighed, "I'm not sure what you're referring to as I have never met a witch before."

Nigel grinned as he lit his cigarette. "My mistake, Fangs."

"Is now the right time to do that?"

He watched as Nigel took a long inhale, eyes fluttering closed, and blew out the smoke right into his face.

"I figure we'll be busy for a while," Nigel said, taking another short puff.

"I suppose."

Hannibal felt eyes on them and his lip curled at the annoyance. “Humans seem far too interested in the business of others.”

“Especially us monsters,” Nigel laughed, “If I had a dollar for how many humans I fucked just because I was a wolf….I’d be as rich as you probably are, Fangs.”

He couldn’t help but look over at Will’s home, with its lights off and shades closed despite it being not very late, and sighed.

“That his place?”

Hannibal looked away. “I am not sure to whom you are referring, nor do I have any idea how you know anything about my life.”

“My mistake,” Nigel grinned, “I hear all sorts of fucking sad sack stories at the bar, I must’ve mixed it up with some other sad fangie.”

He hated the odd feeling that he had forgotten something, like a persistent itch at the back of his neck, but pushed the thought away as nothing.

Nigel seemed the type of monster who liked to manipulate his prey, and with them both being predators Hannibal knew their fight for dominance had yet to take place. No matter what rules they’d laid out.

“Are you through?”

He watched as the cigarette was tossed down onto his driveway and put out with Nigel’s foot.

“Yeah, Fangs….I’m done. Now let’s see just how fucking rich you are.”

Hannibal sighed. “I’m not sure if this was a good idea.”

Nigel stepped up and put his hands on Hannibal’s hips. He felt the wolf’s hardness against his own and licked his lips. “You’re gonna turn me away already, Fangs? After I followed you all the way here?”

“At the very least I’ll need to keep your mouth occupied.”

“I’ve always liked things that were hard and cold in my mouth, Fangs. The colder the better.”

Hannibal pulled hard and back on his hair making Nigel growl as their mouths came dangerously close together. “You had better be worth it.”

Nigel grinned. “Let me in and we’ll find out.”

He let go of him and turned around to walk toward the front steps just as the snow started to fall.

“I fucking love snow,” Nigel said, “Reminds me of home.”

“I’ve never cared for it,” Hannibal murmured, unlocking the door.

“Of course. I’m sure fangies like you…..”

Hannibal ignored him and walked into the house, pausing at the door. “Take off your shoes.”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“The floor is Meridian Maple and….”

Nigel kicked off both his shoes and grabbed Hannibal by the tie, kicking the door closed. He growled, a deep throaty sound that made Hannibal hiss and show his teeth.

“You gonna fuck me here, Fangs or upstairs?”

Hannibal hissed, ripped open his shirt, and turned him back against the door. The smell of him was cloying his senses, a predator in his midst, and Hannibal wanted to do nothing more than devour him.

“Fuck….”

Nigel opened his own jeans, letting them fall, and Hannibal leaned in to sniff at his neck.

“You bother me,” he whispered, “Very much.”

“Do something about it,” Nigel gasped.

Hannibal shoved a spit wet finger into his ass, the tight squeeze he felt against his skin making his entire body warm.

“Have you ever gotten wet for anyone, Wolf?”

Nigel chuckled, “An old fucking wolves tale, Fangs. If you wanna fuck a pussy find someone else to--”

He opened his trousers and exposed his cock. “Mates can bring about changes in all of us.”

“I don’t plan on changing,” Nigel growled, turning to glare at him with yellow lit eyes, “Not fuck me before I get bored!”

Hannibal took out the small packet of lubricant from his suit pocket, tossing the coat to the ground as he tore into it with his fangs. He wet his hardness and pressed it against Nigel’s backside.

“We couldn’t have that,” he hissed.

The first thrust made them both groan, and Hannibal pressed his fangs against Nigel’s shoulder but didn’t bite down.

“Fuck me,” Nigel huffed, “Fuck me, fuck me, fuck….”

Hannibal hissed, biting down as he began to fuck him in earnest, and Nigel cried out when he trapped his hands against the doorframe. The taste of his blood was not quite what he wanted or needed but it was enough, making Hannibal’s body warm again as he continued his punishing rhythm. He could’ve howled himself when Nigel stopped struggling, leaning into his bite, and when he pulled back to kiss him bit Hannibal’s tongue in return.

This was a welcome distraction.

He came with a moan into Nigel’s mouth but continued to move, sucking on Nigel’s tongue as he felt the wolf try to escape his hold. Hannibal pulled his mouth away and flicked his tongue against Nigel’s lip biting just enough to draw blood.

Nigel’s fangs were bloody but he smiled.

“That was more than nip, Fangs,” he whispered, “And I still haven’t fucking come.”

Hannibal pulled out, turned him around, and took Nigel’s cock in hand. “I should kill you.”

“You like me too much,” Nigel grinned, thrusting into his palm, “And I don’t plan on leaving till you pass out with the sun.”

He pressed his nose against Hannibal’s neck.

“If you’re nice I might let you bite me again too.”

Hannibal tightened his grip and Nigel growled. “I don’t plan on being nice, Nigel.”

“Neither do I.”

He began to stroke him fast, his hand quickening as Nigel began to move with him, and pressed their mouths together once more. Nigel’s blood grew sweeter the closer he was to orgasm so Hannibal’s jerked him even faster. He gasped when Nigel spilled between them but didn’t stop until he felt Nigel slump against him.

“That witch didn’t know what he’d be missin’,” Nigel murmured.

Hannibal let him ago and turned to pull the pocket square from his suit coat.

“What witch?”

Nigel laughed. “Nevermind, Fangs,” he sighed, pulling up his jeans, “Are we going upstairs next?”

Hannibal felt oddly perturbed by the idea of Nigel in his bed and shook his head. “There are plenty of other places in this house where we can….work out some frustrations.”

Nigel came up behind him and pressed himself against Hannibal’s backside.

“And maybe I can fuck you a few times tonight too.”

His lip curled. “I’d like to see you try.”

Nigel pulled Hannibal tight to him and nipped the back of his ear. “Game on.”

Chapter 3

Will would never have gone over to Hannibal's if it hadn't snowed again.

It was only an inch and a half but he felt obligated to clear off the vampire's driveway and save him the trouble.

He still doesn't know how he missed the bike parked next to Hannibal's car.

But the man who owned the motorcycle he definitely didn't miss.

The tattered jeans, ripped shirt, scuffed up boots, and cigarette hanging out of his mouth made him the last type of person Will would've expected to come out of Hannibal's house. He slammed the door, cursed, and lit his cigarette just as he took a deep breath and looked at Will. He flashed his eyes at Will and showed fang just before proudly flaunting the many bite marks on his neck.

"Good, um, morning," Will said, pushing up his glasses.

He was frozen as the obvious werewolf took two steps down the newly shoveled stairs and grinned.

"You missed a spot."

Will blushed bright red and the wolf laughed before jumping down the last few stairs. He couldn't look away as the werewolf who Hannibal had obviously slept with straddled the bike and winked before kicking it to life.

His chest felt oddly tight as he imagined what happened last night.

So much for Bev's theory about Hannibal looking for a human mate.

The werewolf pulled out of the driveway slowly and gave Will a little wave just before he took off. A wolf was painted on the side of the bike, small enough not to be obnoxious but big enough to be noticed. Will followed the bike's path as it went up the street and didn't look away until it was gone. He Will didn't finish the last step after, hating how upset he felt, and dragged his snowshovel across the sidewalk all the way home.

He hardly tasted breakfast still thinking about the werewolf's smug smile.

Why was this bothering him?

Yeah, maybe he had a crush on Hannibal who had been totally okay with the idea of Will courting him to mate. The look on Hannibal's face had shown him that, but the very thought of being tied to someone for the rest of his life made Will anxious.

He'd never be able to keep Hannibal's attention for that long, despite what attraction they had to each other, and in time the vampire would regret picking him at all. Will didn't know if matings were reversible, but he thought they probably weren't, and feeling that resentment through such a deep connection sounded like hell.

His mind was already fucked up enough without the nightmares, flashbacks, and terrible thoughts he hid even from himself. Having Hannibal in there hating him didn't sound any better.

But the idea that Hannibal had already found someone already so soon after moving into the neighborhood made Will more upset than it should have. He didn't know him, not really, and yet already he felt drawn to him in a way he'd never been to anyone before.

Will tossed the cereal bowl into the sink, not bothering to wash the mess he'd made, and peeked out again at Hannibal's house. No one was there, and yet he had this inkling that someone *could* be.

He got so caught up in staring at the house that when his phone rang he jumped in surprise.

“Um, hello?”

“So...how’d it go? You never told me what happened last night!”

Bev’s excited voice made Will sigh. “I told him it was a mistake,” he mumbled, suddenly itching to look out the window again, “And...he seemed...unhappy. But he said it was ok.”

She was quiet for a moment, and Will let the curtain fall away again.

“Will…”

“That’s not me, Bev,” he said, forcing himself to move away from the window, “I’m not...someone’s *everything* , and I don’t know the first thing about vampires.”

“It sure seemed like you knew a few things to me,” she teased, “And...I mean...you *like* him, yeah?”

He flopped down on his couch, laid back, and closed his eyes. “I don’t even know him.”

“But meeting him…”

“Bev,” he whispered, voice suddenly thick, “Just...drop it. He’s...got someone. I saw him leave this morning.”

“Oh, the werewolf? I really don’t think that’s anything.”

“How do you even know?”

“The whole block knows about him, Will. Keep up! They pulled up last night together and he left this morning. He probably picked him up in some bar or something. I doubt we’ll be seeing him again.”

Will turned to the side, still feeling like shit, and let himself believe that to be true.

Hannibal had said he was looking for a companion for the night.

Maybe the werewolf was just a one off?

His sudden relief felt ridiculous seeing as how he’d already rejected Hannibal’s courting pledge but he still smiled anyway. “Maybe.”

“No maybe about it,” Bev said, “A guy like that and Hannibal? No way. He wants someone more warm and laid back. Someone who maybe likes dogs and wears really frumpy clothes...and maybe likes to shovel driveways….”

Will laughed. “Bev…”

“You can’t tell me you don’t want to hit that. Every monster fucker on the *block* wants to hit that and even some of the monster haters.”

He blushed and laid his head back again. “I mean...I wouldn’t kick him out of bed but...maybe just not a forever type thing.”

Bev was quiet.

“Well, that’s something.”

“Yeah,” Will sighed, “I guess it is.”

“I’m walking over there. It’s your day off, we’re gonna do something fun.”

He could hear the clip clop of her boots on the sidewalk through the phone.

“You don’t have to, I’m fine.”

“Too late.”

A second later he heard her knocking on the door.

“It’s open.”

She ended the call as she walked inside and sighed deeply at the sight of him. “You saw the werewolf like that?”

He blushed and got up from the couch running fingers through his hair.

“It was ten a.m.! I wasn’t worrying about what I was wearing or how my hair looked! Hannibal is asleep all day!”

“Well on the plus side if he is Hannibal’s new boyfriend he definitely doesn’t think you’re a threat looking like that.”

Will glared at her as he started the coffee. “Shut up.”

He turned back and saw she was peering out the window at Hannibal’s house.

“You did a good job.”

“I didn’t even finish,” Will mumbled, coming to sit on the couch again with a sigh, “I saw him come out and he was all...werewolfy...and I just froze.”

“I heard he’s super hot,” Bev said, then grimaced at Will’s glare, “Sorry but everyone’s talking about it.”

His lip curled as he grabbed the mugs. “He wasn’t *that* good looking.”

“Not what I heard.”

The coffee maker’s noises started to slow down and he pulled the pot out to pour.

“Even if he was... *hot* ...he’s not really all that compatible with Hannibal. I mean...yeah he’s awake during the time he’s asleep and he’s strong enough to protec---”

Will trailed off as his stomach tightened.

“Will?”

He forced himself to smile before he turned back to hand Bev her coffee. “The milk is in the fridge. I can---”

“No, I’ll get it.”

Will drank his black and the bitter taste helped hamper down his sudden sadness. Maybe the werewolf *was* Hannibal’s new boyfriend. Why was he so upset about that? It wasn’t like he really had thought that he could be the mate of a vampire at all, let alone one like Hannibal.

He remembered the disappointed smile Hannibal had given him only last night and gnawed on his lip.

“You’re overthinking again.”

“No, I’m…”

Bev sighed. “Okay,” she said, planting both hands on Will’s counter, “Let’s say the werewolf *is* your hot vampire neighbor’s new boyfriend. Let’s even say...he’s in the running to be your hot vampire neighbor’s eventual....forever person. You yourself said you don’t care, right? So it shouldn’t matter?”

Will closed his eyes and let out a long breath. His mind felt muddled, a bit too much, and he tried to hamper down thoughts he didn’t need to act on. Thoughts that still lingered from his time helping solve murder cases he got too involved in. “Yeah,” he sighed, opening his eyes slowly and smiling, “You’re right. It doesn’t matter.”

Bev frowned. “You’re sure?”

He nodded and forced himself not to think about how the lie felt like acid on his tongue.

“A hundred percent sure.”

Bev grabbed his hand and squeezed. “Okay then,” she said, “What fun thing do you want to do on your day off? Dog shopping?”

Will frowned. “Bev…”

“It’s been almost two years, Will.”

“I’m not ready,” he mumbled, pulling his hand back and leaning against the counter, “I just...no.”

She sighed. “Okay then….scary movie marathon? I promise not to pick any vampire ones!”

Will chuckled. “It’s ten in the morning.”

“That means we have all day!”

He smiled at her and she grinned back. “Okay,” he said, “But no popcorn till after twelve. That’s where I draw the line.”

Bev got up off the stool and patted Will on the shoulder. “Okay, Graham. But that means at least *one* vampire movie.”

Will rolled his eyes. “How about I go to the bakery up the street and get some donuts? And maybe a few muffins”

She hugged him fast. “I knew there was a reason I loved you.”

He scoffed. “Uh huh. Pick the movies while I’m gone. It won’t be long.”

“Yes, sir!”

Will threw on his coat and headed back outside again. He forced himself not to look over at the half finished driveway he’d left unshoveled and got into his car pulling out. The bakery wasn’t far, only a few miles, and it was late enough in the morning he didn’t expect a big crowd.

He moved to park in the side lot, eager to get in, and froze when he saw a motorcycle parked in the second to the last open spot. The wolf was there, mocking him, and Will almost didn’t pull beside the bike but the sudden anger he felt made him.

Twice in one day?

Just his luck.

Will put the car in park before he got out, his anger palpable, and as he headed for the bakery’s door he hoped to hell the wolf was too busy to notice him. The thought lingered as he got closer, and he was so focused on that alone it wasn’t all that hard for him to crash into the person coming out of the bakery.

He fell back on the sidewalk, winced, and looked up into the eyes of the very last person he’d wanted to see again.

“Hey there, Shovel Man! What a small fucking world, huh? Sorry ‘bout that.”

The wolf held out his hand and Will’s lip curled in a snarl just before he took the help. He felt the snow had gotten ass wet and the embarrassment made his cheeks redden. “It’s okay,” he said, “I should’ve been watching where I was…”

The werewolf turned Will’s hand over and he frowned at the scrutiny. “Hmm…”

“Excuse me, is there something…”

He let go of Will’s hand and grinned. “Sorry, Shovel Man. I was just checking that you’re not a witch.”

Will frowned. “A witch?”

“Gotta be fucking careful, you know?”

His eyes flashed once and Will pulled his hand back. “No, but...I’m not a witch, so...there are witches?”

“There’s all sorts out there, Shovel Man.”

Will glared. “My name is…”

“Will!”

The bakery door opened and kind old Mrs. Baker stuck her head out. “Are you comin’ in here young man or am I gonna have to drag you away from Nigel?”

He looked at the wolf, Nigel apparently, and forced himself to smile. “I’m coming in,” he said, heading toward her.

“See you around, Shovel Man,” Nigel said, making Will turn to glare at him again.

“My name is….”

“Will,” he finished for him, winking, “Good to know for next time...Shovel Man.”

Will’s lip curled and he felt an odd urge to growl but held it in as he watched Nigel head for his bike. He thought a million bad things just staring, and got so lost in those thoughts Mrs. Baker’s voice had to pull him out again.

“Will, c’mon now, yer letting in the cold.”

He forced himself to smile again as he came inside. “Sorry, I was…”

“Lost staring at that very nice lookin’ werewolf,” she said, coming back around the counter, “I could tell. You know, he said he was single. If he comes around next time I can get his phone number for you.”

“No, I don’t want his phone number!” Will spat back, startling her and the two college girls who worked there: Abigail and Marissa.

Mrs. Baker held up her hands. “Alright, alright...no phone numbers. What’ll it be?”

Will looked back out the window again and saw that Nigel’s bike was gone. “Donuts,” he mumbled, suddenly feeling more calm, “I need a dozen donuts...and maybe two muffins.”

“Anything special you want to pick?”

“Surprise me.”

The three women got to work on his order and Will pulled out his phone to check the time. He sent Bev a quick text.

You won't believe who I saw at the bakery.

When she didn't answer right away he put the phone back in his pocket just in time for Mrs. Baker to call out his name. "Will?"

"Finished?"

"Yep," she said, grinning, "That'll be twenty one seventy five."

He handed them twenty five dollars. "Keep the change."

Mrs. Baker smiled at him. "You're such a sweet boy."

Will blushed. "Um...thanks. I...I'll see you again soon."

"Bye Will!"

He carried the donuts and muffins out the door setting the two boxes on the seat behind him before he got inside. A vibration in his pocket meant Bev had answered his text and he pulled out his phone to see what she'd said.

OMG THE MOTORCYCLE WEREWOLF IS BACK!

The bottom dropped out of Will's stomach.

WHAT?

Chapter 4

Hannibal knew that Nigel was a mistake.

Their dalliance should have been a one night event, a release of tension and aggression that he needed to let loose. Yet when he woke that evening and found the wolf lingering around his home his need outweighed his rational thought.

He went into the refrigerator, took out the container of fresh blood, and poured it into a cup.

“You’re still here.”

Nigel was drinking what looked to be whiskey, and eating a muffin of some sort. “I thought you’d need some...company.”

“I don’t,” he said, taking a sip of his cold blood, “One night was mistake enough.”

“That’s too bad,” Nigel sighed, eyes flashing, “I could’ve used another night like last. It’s been forever.”

Hannibal licked his lips. “I’m sorry to disappoint you.”

“Hmm.”

He watched Nigel finish the muffin, wiping his hands and crumbs all over the counter. “Most guests would clean up after themselves, not make more of a mess.”

Nigel grinned. “I”m not a guest, Fangs, am I? I’m just a leftover mistake. Though Shovel Man really did seem put out to find me leaving your place this morning.”

Hannibal blinked, setting down his mug. “Shovel Man?”

“Yeah,” Nigel laughed, finishing the rest of his whiskey in a quick shot, setting it down hard, “He was shoveling your porch and caught me. Poor little guy looked devastated.”

He felt hope rise in his chest. “He was...jealous?”

“Maybe? I dunno, really. Just looked like I ran over his dog or something. Is that the one you were mooning over at the bar?”

Hannibal picked up his mug again, sipping slowly before he answered. “I was not mooning over anyone.”

“Oh right.”

“When did you see this….Shovel Man? Did he have brown curly hair and blue eyes?”

Nigel's smile widened. "That's him. I saw him this morning when I was leaving and then when I got a muffin down the street. I think he said his name was…"

"Will."

"Got it in one, Fangs. It is him, eh?"

Hannibal took another sip of his blood, frowning. "Yes."

"He seemed pretty damn upset to see me comin' out of your fucking place," Nigel teased, leaning forward, "You...looking to mate him?"

"Not that it's any of your business, Nigel, but...Will is not interested in being a mate. He inadvertently had me thinking he was but he is not."

"You're not interested in a nip and fuck there?"

The very idea of bedding Will and even sipping a drop of his blood without intent to mate made him ill. "No."

"Well...fuck Shovel Man. You're rich, fucking hot, and a goddamn vampire. Who needs a fucking mate? I know I'd rather shoot myself in the head than get stuck with one."

Hannibal frowned. "You've never…"

A dark look came over Nigel's face before he answered. "No one worth giving a fucking thought to, no, and...a little nip and fuck is all I need. The fucking love is...a disease. Who needs that?"

"I do."

Nigel sighed. "It really was one fucking night, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

He smiled, getting up from the stool to begin looking into cabinets around the kitchen. "Got any blood wine?"

"I did not invite you to stay."

"You didn't tell me to leave either, Fangs," he laughed, "I know you like me, and I like talking to you. Don't even fucking pretend."

Hannibal sighed. "I never once made any indication that I…." he paused as Nigel opened another cabinet, stamming it closed with his hand, "There is no liquor worth drinking in the kitchen. The liquor cabinet is in the dining room."

Nigel slapped his shoulder, eyes lighting up yellow for just a moment. "I knew you liked me, Fangs."

“My name is…”

“Hannibal,” Nigel said, “I know.”

He followed Nigel out of the kitchen and sat at the dining room table as he took out a bottle of blood wine. “Ahh...this here...good fucking stuff, Fangs.”

“It’s a good vintage,” he sighed, still feeling melancholic as Nigel went to the china cabinet for glasses.

“This shit with Shovel Man really has gotten to you, hasn’t it?”

“It seems so.”

Nigel poured them both some wine and handed Hannibal his glass. “Well...he sure seemed...upset both times I saw him today. Fucking devastated.”

Hannibal sipped. “Perhaps he does not like werewolves.”

“Humans love all things supernatural, Fangs. Even the ones who hate us secretly wanna little...nip and fuck, “ he grinned at Hannibal, taking a long drink, “Nah...that...I know fucking jealousy when I see it.”

“I am aware of my own attractiveness. Someone being jealous that you’ve spent the night with me does not mean…”

Nigel grabbed Hannibal’s hand on the table. “I know all about werewolf matings, Fangs, but...what happens when someone wants to...challenge...a courting?”

Hannibal took another long sip, feeling a bit blood drunk. “The two courters...they...show their teeth.”

“Show their....they....” Nigel whistled, “Fangies really do go all the way fucking out. I thought maybe a fight or just a few pretty gifts but...you really would want some defenseless little human to kill someone for you?”

He felt a shudder go through him at the very idea. “As many as they could to curry favor over the other.”

“It’s illegal for even us to share, how’s a human supposed to do that?”

Hannibal’s fangs ached as he finished his glass. “If it’s meant to be...the challenger would figure out how.”

Nigel poured them both another drink. “I fucking guess so,” he scoffed, “How did you even meet Shovel Man, anyhow?”

“He shoveled my walkway,” Hannibal mumbled, taking another sip, “It’s a sign of intent but he was unaware.”

Nigel laughed. “Oh fuck, you were probably wrecked.”

“Yes.”

They were both quiet. “Stupid humans.”

“How would you want to be courted?” Hannibal asked, feeling absolutely blood drunk now.

“No one’s gonna court me.”

“If you...could be.”

Nigel laughed. “I don’t need any shoveling, that’s for fucking sure,” he shook his head, “I...just want someone who’d fight for me. Someone who’d...fucking want me so much they’d...feel lost without me.”

“And someone who could make you wet.”

“I told you that’s an old fucking wolves’ tale, Fangs. No wolves get fucking wet assholes when they meet their mate or anyone else.”

“Hmm…that’s not what I‘ve heard. Wolves mate for life, just as vampires do, but they...get more affected by meeting their mates. There’s one rumor that they male wolves can even get preg…”

Nigel growled. “Shut the fuck up, Fangs. Just shut it.”

Hannibal smiled. “Your upset means you’ve thought about this.”

Nigel’s eyes glowed yellow and his teeth were longer than they’d been a moment ago. “I’m warning you, Fangs.”

He poured himself some more blood wine and took a long gulp, the warm feeling filling all the lonely coldness in him. “I don’t do well with warnings.”

“Just because you spend all your fucking hours mooning over Shovel Man and hoping he throws corpses at your door doesn’t mean there can’t be creatures who just want to nip and fuck without getting…”

“Someone broke your heart,” Hannibal said softly, running his finger along the rim of the glass, “And soured you on forever. I feel sorry for any person who *does* attempt to court you. They’ll have a rough…”

Nigel leapt across the table, knocking both Hannibal, the bottle, and the chair to the ground. He snapped at him, growling, and they rolled around as Hannibal finally bit at his neck, subduing him. His own thin growl was the only sound after, the two of their chests heaving against each other, and Hannibal did not let go.

“Let me fucking go!”

He bit down harder and felt Nigel tense. “Fangs, just…”

Hannibal heard him let out a sob, followed by his chest heaving harder now, and he let go just as Nigel burst into tears. He climbed off of him, sighing at the mess on the floor, and leaned his head against the wall watching the werewolf cry.

“Are they alive?”

Nigel sniffled, wiping his face, and sat up slow before falling down twice. Hannibal reached out to help and grabbed his hand, pulling until Nigel fell almost into his shoulder. “That bitch is raising pups with some dirty human.”

“I admire your restraint.”

He sniffled, reaching for the fallen bottle, and taking a long swallow before sighing loudly.

“I hate you.”

“No, you do not.”

“You should’ve fucking stopped when I told you to.”

“I knew you needed the release, and we are not having sexual relations again so it seemed...appropriate. I apologize if what I said upset you.”

Nigel laughed. “That’s not a fucking apology.”

“No, but it works more often than you’d think.”

They both laughed. “Humans.”

“Perhaps...your...intended...will not be human.”

“I won’t have a mate, Fangs. You, though...Shovel Man really was upset. Maybe...I can help you with that.”

“I think Will is not the type to be a forever mate, I need to just…”

Nigel put his hand over Hannibal’s mouth. “Shut the fuck up, ok? I can help you...you know? All we gotta do is make it *look* like we’re fucking. Will’s gonna get all upset, and he’ll eventually *blow.* He might even challenge me and put me out of my fucking misery.”

“I don’t want you dead, Nigel. Not when I’ve just started to enjoy your company.”

“Awww,” Nigel said, turning to pat his cheek, “Fangs…”

“That does not mean I want to have sex with you again.”

Nigel sighed. “That was a great fucking night. You sure?”

“Yes.”

He handed Hannibal the bottle and he took the last long sip setting it down. “That will stain.”

“Probably.”

“I need to call a carpet cleaner.”

“Can we kill him?” Nigel asked, trying to stand, “Cuz really all this talk about corpses…”

Hannibal shook his head. “Neither of us is in our right mind, and...really...not a good plan.”

“Mmm…”

He pulled the phone from his pocket and spoke.

“Carpet cleaners.”

“I have found…”

Those were the last words Hannibal remembered hearing before he woke the next evening. The carpet was clean when he got out of bed, the dishes were as well, and a note was on his counter.

I didn’t kill him.

- **N**

Hannibal smiled and got himself something to drink. He had a bit of a headache but that did not make him cancel today’s appointments. He needed the distraction. After having his breakfast blood he put on his coat, grabbed his keys, and stepped outside only to freeze.

His driveway was once again shoveled and he could see freshly fallen snow on the edge of his window sills.

He frowned.

Perhaps Nigel had taken the liberty.

He climbed into his car, pulled on his safety belt, and turned just in time to see the bottle of blood wine on his passenger seat.

Hannibal smiled when he saw the note folded beneath it.

For next time.

- **N**

He pulled out of the driveway still smiling. Perhaps his dalliance with Nigel had not been a mistake. It would be, after all, nice to have a friend with similar interests even if their personalities were anything but.

No, Nigel was not a mistake.

He just….wasn’t Will.

Chapter 5

Will sighed as he stared out the window.

“Take a picture, it’ll last longer.”

“I don’t even know if vampires show up in pictures,” he mumbled, watching no movement at the house next door.

“Go over and ask him.”

“Bev…”

“Will…”

He looked over at her and frowned. “That werewolf Nigel has been at his place four nights this week.”

She smiled. “You’re counting?”

Will blushed and pushed his glasses up as he sat with her on the couch.. “He’s just...hard to miss.”

Bev patted his shoulder. “You know, if you’d just go over and t---”

He turned the channel. “It’s over, ok? I told him I wasn’t into all that and Hannibal’s already moved on so there’s no point.”

Bev sighed. “You’re an idiot. Every single person on this block wants a piece of him and he actually seemed to like you. You’re the one who rejected him.”

Will stared at his hands and said nothing.

“And you stopped doing his driveway.”

“The werewolf can do his driveway,” Will mumbled, “He’s doing everything else.”

“You sound like a jealous ex, Will,” she sighed, laying her head on his shoulder,“If you’d just…”

“No, Bev.”

“Fine.”

The movie that night was one of Will’s favorites, an old whodunnit drama in black and white about a serial killer. It took forever for him to be able to watch this kinda stuff for years after he’d quit his job consulting on the very same thing, but now it really didn’t bother him.

“I know you mean well.”

“Do you?”

“I do,” he sighed, “I just...I’m not the forever type.”

“You won’t know until you try.”

Will doesn’t say anything else after that.

The movie ended up going on well past midnight, longer than Will remembered, and he gets Bev comfortable on the couch before walking to the window again. The two of them are outside talking by Nigel’s motorcycle, laughing in an easy camaraderie that makes Will’s chest ache. Why was this bothering him so much?

He didn’t know Hannibal beyond that first meeting and yet seeing them together now made him want to tear the werewolf’s eyes out.

Will gritted his teeth as Hannibal put a hand on Nigel’s shoulder and was about to turn away when the werewolf turned first. Nigel saw Will, his yellow eyes lit in the dark, and when he grabbed the front of Hannibal’s shirt pulling him into a kiss Will finally had enough.

He practically ran to his bedroom shaking with anger and got naked down to his briefs lying back as he tried to calm down.

His mind raced with thoughts of how Nigel and Haninbal had met. What type of courting gesture had Nigel done for him? He was sure it had to be more impressive than snow shoveling.

Will rolled around for the next few hours until he got so tired he passed out.

There was a note on his fridge when he woke the next morning.

Talk to him.

- Bev

Will made toast for breakfast, barely able to keep his eyes open, and walked to the window to stare at Hannibal’s driveway now covered in snow. He didn’t see Nigel’s motorcycle

anywhere and judging by the wolf's late hours he probably wouldn't be back until late. Hannibal had appointments every Tuesday and Thursday night, Will knew.

He wouldn't have much time to shovel.

Will bit his bottom lip.

It wasn't his place to do it.

He pulled himself away from the window and made some coffee, sipping with building unease.

Nigel might come back before nightfall and clear the way for Hannibal. Will didn't have to be 'Shovel Man' again and seem like a loser.

Will had work today anyway. No reason to worry himself to death over this. He finished his coffee, got dressed, and was out the door by nine for his shift. Yes he thought about the driveway on and off all day long but really it was gonna be fine.

He drove home just as the sun was going down and pulled into his driveway in time to see more snow had fallen.

Will shoveled his own driveway and sidewalks before looking at Hannibal's again. He knew from watching the vampire leave that he never really left for a good hour after sundown. That was more than enough time.

He ran his shovel in a small path that from the door to the car. That would be enough. He was headed back to his house when a voice he hadn't heard in days called out just as Will got to the end of the driveway.

"Thank you!"

Will turned just in time to see Hannibal take the path he'd made. He felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment when Hannibal got to the car.

"You're welcome," he said, "I was surprised that your new boyfriend didn't…"

Hannibal frowned. "Boyfriend?"

"Mate? Significant…whatever word you're using for the werewolf who—"

He walked through the snow to get to Will.

"I'm afraid there's been a misunderstanding. Nigel and I are friends. We're not romantically involved."

"I saw him kiss you."

"He…can get playful. I assure you, Will, I'm not romantically involved with anyone."

Will blinked. "Oh."

"Or am I?" Hannibal asked, staring behind him at the path.

Will blushed. "I…I'm…"

"I'm very interested," Hannibal purred, eyeing him openly now, "I just thought I'd let you know. Your mistake and subsequent additional shoveling of my driveway has only increased that."

“I was…being a good neighbor,” Will said weakly, “I’m…”

He sighed stepping back.

“Of course. I won’t bother you again but I’d ask if you’d refrain from shoveling. Thank you.”

Will’s chest ached as he watched Hannibal walk to the car. He turned away from the house and made it a few steps to his own before running behind the car to stop it.

“Wait!”

Hannibal parked and got out frowning. “Will, there’s no need to---”

“Vampires mate for life, right?”

He paused. “Yes.”

“But...not every person they go out with is mate material.”

“Yes, but…”

“I get this feeling when I’m around you,” Will admitted, turning bright red, “And since Nigel’s been here I’ve...been jealous. We don’t even know each other and I fucked up with all this shoveling but…”

Hannibal lifted Will’s chin up and their eyes met.

“What are you trying to say?”

“We can go out on a date, maybe? If you want to do that? Or just...I mean it doesn’t have to be about mating.”

Hannibal smiled. “No, it doesn’t.”

“And if things get better and you don’t think I’m completely hopeless…”

“Yes?”

“I’d really like to see you, and...shovel your driveway.”

He felt his heart beat faster when Hannibal ran cold fingers across his cheek. “I’d very much like to see you too.”

“So...tonight? Or tomorrow night? When…”

“Tonight, if possible. Late. If it’s not an inconvenience.”

Will licked his lips. “No, it’s not. I...I don’t know what to…”

“I’ll cook something that suits us both,” Hannibal whispered, his smile widening.

Will couldn’t help the reaction to seeing his full fangs and shivered when Hannibal pulled his hand away.

“Okay.”

“I’m very happy you came back, Will.”

He smiled. “Me too.”

Will watched him go back to his car, still smiling, and when the car pulled away Hannibal waved just once before the Bentley disappeared into the night.

He grinned and stared at the empty driveway still covered in snow.

And began to get to work.

Hannibal would be happy to see it cleared, and the strange need to do so was something he was no longer gonna question.

He had a date tonight.

Will pulled out his phone and texted Bev.

I talked to him. We’re gonna have dinner tonight.

Her reply was immediate.

I AM COMING OVER.

Will laughed and typed another one.

Give me a few minutes I’m shoveling.

Oh god you’re so cute. I can’t wait till you piss off the whole neighborhood over this.

Will smiled and started to shovel.

He couldn’t either.

Chapter 6

Hannibal had never anticipated a dinner more than this one.

His time at the office was occupied for several hours thinking about his impending date with Will. He planned their meal, the table arrangement, and even got lost in thoughts of how the evening would go.

He knew Will was still quite wary of the idea of being a vampire mate and one ill timed gesture or thought may ruin their relationship even before it had begun.

This evening had to be perfect.

The very minute he got home he began to prepare and by ten p.m. everything was ready, including himself. Hannibal wore a dark blue suit, striped tie, and matching loafers as he made his way to Will's home to retrieve him. He knocked twice and tried not to worry he'd be greeted with Will's upturned frown.

The door opened and he blinked in surprise.

Will wore a gray suit, white shirt underneath, and red tie. His hair was mildly tamed, though the curls were still quite visible, and he had foregone his glasses. Hannibal licked his fangs as he stared at him.

"You look...exquisite."

He blushed and Hannibal wanted to bite his cheeks. "Thanks, I...I've been going through clothes all day and…"

Hannibal took his hand and kissed it. "You chose well. Can I escort you to my home for dinner?"

Will nodded. "Please."

He took Will's hand and they walked down the sidewalk.

"I can feel eyes on us."

Will laughed. "Bev said I'm gonna piss off the whole neighborhood."

Hannibal smiled. "I will look forward to the fight."

Will squeezed his hand. "What makes you think I'd fight for you?"

He looked at Will as they made their way up his porch stairs. "I...have my suspicions."

Will smiled. "Oh?"

“Yes,” he teased, “You see, no one else made any gestures quite like yours.”

He opened the door and Will stepped inside.

“I made mine without even realizing it.”

“Yes,” he said softly, putting his hand on Will’s lower back, “I know.”

Will turned to stare at him and licked his lips. “That makes a difference?”

“You went by instinct, Will. That makes *all* the difference.”

Will let out a long breath. “Oh.”

“Come, let me show you to the table.”

He led Will to the dining room and the sharp intake of breath made him look to see Will’s wide eyed stare at the table.

“Wow.”

“I’ve made us each something different,” he said, pulling out Will’s chair, “For you,” he lifted the cover off Will’s plate, “Filet Mignon, pan seared with garlic butter and herb roasted potatoes. For myself, I made blood sausage pasta with parmesan glaze.”

He pushed in Will’s chair.

“Wow, this...looks amazing.”

“I hope you like it.”

Hannibal walked around to his seat and watched Will take his first bite. The moan that came from him went right to Hannibal’s cock and he couldn’t help but bare his fangs to watch. Will’s gaze lifted and his blush deepened. “Sorry, it’s...really good.”

“Don’t apologize,” he whispered, “And thank you.”

He took the first bites of his own food, the blood warming him, and the silence as they ate felt oddly comfortable. Hannibal paid little attention to the taste of his own meal, focused so highly on Will’s, and the shared gazes they had were everything.

Will finished rather fast, his enjoyment only amplifying Hannibal’s own, and when he was done he seemed sheepish.

“I’m...sorry if…”

“You do not have to apologize, Will. A comfortable silence is just fine, and...I enjoy watching you eat a meal I’ve prepared.”

Will smiled. “Okay.”

“You obviously enjoyed it.”

“The best thing I’ve ever eaten.”

Hannibal’s whole body warmed to the compliment. “Thank you.”

“You cook a lot?”

He set his fork down and smiled. “Yes, though not quite often for others. I gave many dinner parties back home, but the...community...here is not quite up to my tastes.”

Will frowned. “You seem to get along with Nigel pretty well.”

“You do not like Nigel.”

“He’s...I mean...I think he knew that I liked you and was teasing me a little.”

“I apologize,” Hannibal said, frowning, “Nigel is...an acquired taste. I will admit even I did not like him much during our first meeting.”

“But that didn’t stop you from…”

Hannibal licked his fangs. “Yes, we had sexual relations. Does that bother you?”

Will frowned. “It shouldn’t, I’m not...I mean...this is our first date.”

“But it does.”

He nodded. “Yeah, it does.”

Hannibal leaned forward slightly. “Why?”

“I don’t know.”

“Yes, you do.”

“H…”

Hannibal’s whole body heated at Will’s possessiveness already, and the very idea of him fighting Nigel for him made his fangs ache. “Will…”

Will’s gaze darkened. “I just...really...don’t want you to be with anyone else.”

He could’ve roared at the confession.

“You know that statement could be taken as an act of intent itself, Will.”

Will swallowed past what he hoped was the fear that held him back for so long.

“And if it was?”

Hannibal got up from the table and walked around to sit beside him. He took Will's hand in his and was not turned away. "You rejected the idea not too long ago."

"I…"

"Is this the start of our courting, Will?"

Will's bottom lip quivered as he spoke. "I...really like you and I...I don't want anyone else to be with you."

"Will…"

He put his hand on Hannibal's cheek. "Yes."

Hannibal resisted the urge to kiss him.

He did not want to quicken this.

The act of courting was to be savored, not rushed, but he ached so much already.

"I accept your court."

Will smiled.

"What does...I mean…"

"Do what you feel is right, Will, but...the act of consummation...should be savored. I do not wish to rush things. You may decide you're not quite ready and I don't want to experience that only to lose it."

Will frowned. "Okay."

Hannibal kissed his cheek and leaned in to whisper in his ear. "Thank you."

"I...you're welcome."

"I'll get dessert."

He forced himself to leave, shaking with need, and found their dessert in the refrigerator. This development was a welcome one, quite welcome, but still he worried.

Should he have pushed Will back from such a declaration so soon?

Perhaps.

But it felt right.

Hannibal took their plates into the dining room and Will's face lit up at his return. He sat down beside him and smiled.

"Sanguinaccio Dolce," he said softly, "It's…"

“Blood,” Will said, lifting his spoon, “Yeah I...I’ve heard of it.”

“You…”

He blushed as he took a spoonful. “I may have been...researching things to make for you.”

Hannibal smiled. “I see.”

Will took the spoon to his mouth and Hannibal watched with anticipation as he tasted. He closed his eyes and sighed. “Amazing.”

“Thank you.”

He took a bite of his own and the blood had his whole body pounding but he resisted. This was not a race.

“Yours is…?”

“Made with human blood, yes,” Hannibal said, taking a bite and watching Will’s reaction.

The blood that rushed to his cheeks this time did not seem to be from embarrassment.

“Oh.”

“I assure you, I made yours with ordinary pig’s blood. I would never…”

Hannibal watched in surprise as Will dipped his spoon into the pudding of his own dish. He growled as Will took the spoon to his own mouth and tasted.

“Mmm...I think yours is better.”

“Will..”

He blinked. “Should I not have done that?”

“I...find myself overcome with desire that you did without thought.”

“That’s...good.”

“I think perhaps you should retire early, Will. I’m unsure if I’ll be able to resist you much longer.”

Will frowned. “Oh.”

“I’m not rejecting you, it’s quite the opposite,” Hannibal said, nearly hissing as his vision reddened, “I…”

Will leaned in and kissed him so softly he whimpered.

“I understand, Hannibal. I’ll go.”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “This courting…”

Will smiled. “Might be pretty short.”

Hannibal smiled. “Yes.”

“Goodnight, Hannibal. I had a great time.”

“Goodnight, Will. I did as well.”

He watched him go, digging his nails into the chair so as not to follow, and when he heard his own door close he devoured both his and Will’s desserts only to rush to the kitchen for more blood. He was ravenous, desperate, and when he finished he stroked his hardness through until he came quite quickly nearly roaring at his release. Hannibal slid down to the kitchen floor and laughed, staring at the blood on his hands.

This night hadn’t ended as he’d hoped but somehow it still had gone well.

Will was everything he’d hoped he would be.

He could hardly wait to see how the next phase of their court would transpire.

Chapter 7

Will couldn’t stop smiling all day.

He got up, sighed, and opened his eyes slowly only to suddenly remember last night.

His smile never left him. Not as he got dressed, not as he ate his cereal, and not even when he found the note attached to his door.

YOU DON’T DESERVE A VAMPIRE!

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

Will crumbled the note and tossed it in Hannibal’s trash can when he went over to shovel the light snow that had dusted his driveway. He made sure to take his time, looking out around him to see if anyone watched, and put his shovel right against the front of Hannibal’s house.

He got a dirty look from Mrs. Komeda as she walked her dog across the street and he waved before getting into his car.

All day at work he smiled, and people asked him if he was ok.

“I’m great,” he said, blushing.

It wasn’t like him, not at all, and yet he didn't care.

He was happy.

Which was why when he got to his house to find the paint splattered on his stairs his mood faded. The red paint was hard to miss, splattered all over along with broken balloons. He glared back around him and picked up the note left taped to his porch rail.

YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF HIM!

Will's lip curled as he turned around toward Hannibal's house and paused when he saw the time.

It was three thirty, about an hour till sunset, but he had no desire to cross his porch. He sat on the porch, not caring for the cold, and gave dirty looks to everyone who passed by for the next hour until the door opened.

"Will?"

He turned, shivering, and Hannibal frowned at him. "What's happened?"

Will stood up so fast he stumbled, falling into Hannibal's arms, and blinked back sudden tears.

"My porch," he whispered, "I…"

Hannibal turned, and he watched his eyes darken. "Someone defaced your property?"

"Yeah, it's...I…"

He lifted Will up easily and pulled him into his arms. "I'm sorry, if this is because of me I…"

Will kissed him then, couldn't, and Hannibal's arms tightened around his back to get closer. He moaned, digging his nails into him, and Hannibal turned Will against the house until Will

couldn’t breathe.

He broke the kiss and stared into Will’s eyes. “Will…”

“Fuck ‘em,” Will whispered, “They don’t matter.”

“Please, let me help you get warm. Come inside.”

Will nodded, stepping back, and they walked into the house holding hands before the door shut behind them. He felt the heat and rubbed his arms through his coat. “I guess I am kinda cold.”

“Yes, I...I can start the fireplace. Please.”

They walked into the living room, just as beautiful as Will expected, and he knelt down by the fire to take off his coat.

“I was so happy all day,” he sighed, “And then I got home and...fuck. It’s gonna take me a whole day to get that stuff off.”

“The assailants will be found and taken care of,” Hannibal growled, lighting the fire, “Do not worry.”

“You were asleep,” Will said, smiling, “There’s no way you…”

Hannibal knelt down beside him as the flames came to life, and he put his arm around Will. Will sighed and leaned against him. “They will be dealt with, Will. I promise you.”

Will shook his head. “This isn’t medieval times, Hannibal. You can’t just---”

Hannibal turned his cheek and smiled down at him. “Can’t I?”

He shivered. “I...I’d rather deal with it myself, if you do find them.”

“Will…”

“It’s a porch,” Will sighed, “I...yeah it sucks but...I’ll fix it. I’m good at fixing things.”

Hannibal rubbed his arm. “This anger may only worsen if we continue to court.”

“So?” Will mumbled, closing his eyes, “I don’t care.”

“I don’t want you to be hurt for my sake, Will.”

“No one’s gonna hurt me,” Will laughed, taking his hand, “The best they’ll do is egg my house and call me names.”

“That...doesn’t not make me feel better.”

Will kissed his hand. “This,” he whispered, entwining their fingers together, “This makes me feel better.”

“Will…”

“Can I ask you something?” Will asked, blushing that he even was going to ask at all.

“Of course.”

He let out a breath. “Did...after I left...did you---?”

Hannibal kissed Will’s cheek and breathed him in deeply. “Yes,” he said, “Immediately after.”

Will’s cock twitched. “Hannibal…”

“I grew ravenous with need,” he growled, licking Will’s cheek, “And...ate both of our desserts before stroking myself to completion. Does that please you?”

Will moaned. “Y...yeah.”

“Did you succumb?”

“I..yeah, I jerked off in bed and...had the wildest dreams.”

Hannibal smiled. “Care to tell me?”

Will laughed. “Not if you want to *savor* the act of lovemaking like you said.”

“They were that...ravenous?”

“Yes, it...yeah.”

Hannibal pulled Will in closer and he felt fangs brush his skin. He groaned. “Will…”

“Hannibal, I...are you sure you want to wait?”

He sighed, kissing Will’s cheek. “Yes, I’m...quite sure. I apologize if that upsets you.”

Will frowned and moved away a little. “It’s ok,” he said, “I mean...it’s a big deal and I get it.”

Hannibal picked up the fireplace poker and poked at the wood. “If you feel safer staying the night you’re more than welcome.”

Will smiled. “You honestly think we can keep our hands off each other if I stay over?”

“I will be an utmost gentleman.”

He shook his head. “You don’t have to, I can---”

Hannibal let the poker fall from his hands and put both on Will’s cheeks. He frowned at him. “It would make me feel better if you did, Will. Please?”

“You really are worried.”

“Yes.”

“I...ok, I can stay.”

He smiled and kissed him softly, moving to stand. “Thank you, Will. I can get started on dinner for the both of us right away. It will only take me a few hours but…”

Will laughed and pulled him down again. “Don’t bother,” he whispered, “I’ll order something and you can just have blood, it...I’m fine with that.”

Hannibal frowned. “I am more than happy to make you a meal. You are a guest in my house and…”

Will kissed him again, unable to stop, and Hannibal growled pulling him into his lap. He felt warm all over, desperate to get closer, but pulled back for breath. “This...it’s gonna be really hard.”

He brushed the hair from Will’s forehead and smiled. “Is it not *already* hard?”

He laughed. “Are you making sexy jokes now?”

“I will make as many as possible in order to make you laugh like that again.”

Will blushed. “I...I like you alot. That might sound corny or like a little kid crush but---”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “It doesn’t,” he whispered, “I...I like you a lot too.”

They smiled and cuddled up again together, watching the fire until Will’s stomach growled.

“I guess I better call for pizza or something.”

“Let me.”

Forty five minutes later they were still on the floor surrounded by pizza and a glass filled with blood on a tray that Hannibal insisted upon. He sipped while he watched Will, unable to

look away, and by the time Will finished more than half the pepperoni pizza they were in each other's arms again.

Will sighed, his eyes heavy, and Hannibal rubbed his back. "If you're tired, I can take you to the guest room."

He shook his head. "I'm not tired, I just…"

Hannibal kissed his cheek. "You can hardly keep your eyes open."

Will smiled. "'M ok."

He didn't remember falling asleep but woke the next morning to a note on the night stand.

Will,

I took the liberty of calling someone to fix the mess on your porch and I've made you breakfast in the refrigerator that only needs reheating. Please stay as long as you'd like, unless you have to go, which is just fine.

I quite enjoyed our time together last night.

Please do not hesitate to come to me again when you need to feel safe.

Hannibal

Will found his phone plugged in on the table and laughed when he realized that Hannibal more than likely went to his house to get his plug. He imagined the angry block mob's reaction to that and practically skipped down the stairs.

There was a covered plate in the refrigerator that contained eggs, bacon, and sausage that he ate while he went to peek outside.

He nearly dropped the plate when he saw his porch.

Someone had painted it entirely in red, and it oddly complemented the bushes outside his house. The white and red looked really great together. He wiped at his eyes as he bit into his sausage, and pulled out his phone.

He had twenty seven text messages.

All from Bev.

Will set his plate down on the counter and called her, smiling as he got up on the stool.

“OMG WHY DIDN’T YOU CALL ME?”

He laughed. “I was sleeping.”

“Not all night!” she yelled, “I was so worried and then I heard from Sally that Hannibal brought you inside and you NEVER CAME OUT! Komeda is dying from jealousy along with at least five others who demand that I tell them everything. Did you guys…?”

“No,” he said, “It’s...we’re not rushing things. Hannibal wants to...savor the wait.”

Bev sighed. “That’s so cute.”

“He fixed my porch,” Will said, “I…”

“Oh no, *he* didn’t,” Bev said, “Some sexy ass vampire dude showed up last night and fixed it. I don’t know anything about him but he was big and tattooed and...the dude was lucky to make it out of his neighborhood without being mauled.”

Will laughed. “I’m not sorry I missed it, I...I slept the best I have in a really long time.”

“Will…”

“I...I really like him, Bev.”

She sighed again. “I know, and...I’m so happy you finally got your head out of your ass to realize that.”

He laughed. “Me too.”

“So are you gonna help shovel my driveway today or…?”

Will looked behind him, frowning, and then around the house. “Um...I was thinking of just hanging around here. It’s my day off and...Hannibal’s asleep. I don’t really want to leave him alone, you know?”

Bev was quiet.

“Bev?”

“Will, you do realize what you just said?”

He frowned. “What?”

“Vampire mates are meant to protect their vampire halves, and you...you just said you were worried about leaving him alone asleep.”

Will blinked. “Oh, I...I did, didn’t I?”

“Uh huh.”

He blushed. “That...that’s good, I think?”

“Yeah honey, it’s...so good. I’ll let you go, ok?”

Will frowned. “Ok. Bye.”

“Bye.”

He ended the call and set the phone down while poking at his breakfast.

Was he that into Hannibal already that he was ready to give up his whole life to keep him safe?

And if he was, how could he keep him safe when he could barely keep himself safe fending off jealous neighbors?

Will frowned.

He didn’t know, but right now all he wanted to do was be sure no one could get to Hannibal while he was sleeping. Will got up and went back upstairs peeking into rooms until he found one at the end of the hall. He peeked inside and found the curtains were blacked out so there was barely any light in the room.

Will pulled out his phone and stepped inside to find Hannibal asleep on the bed.

He closed the door, locked it, and climbed right in bed beside him.

Will sighed and touched his cheek. “I’ll be right here.”

He laid down, closed his eyes, and fell asleep again.

If anyone came in he’d be here.

Exactly where he was supposed to be.

Chapter 8

The first thing Hannibal realized when he started to wake was that there was someone holding him. He turned, confused, and stared in shock at Will sleeping soundly beside him. He reached out to touch Will's face and smiled as Will leaned into his hand.

This was a very overt gesture in their courting, and Will probably hadn't even realized he'd made it.

Will had protected him while he slept.

Hannibal's chest ached as he stared at him in the dark.

He'd never seen anyone look more beautiful.

Will pulled him in closer and he settled his head on Will's shoulder with a sigh. Hannibal was not at all tired but being this near to Will even for sleeping was very nice. He breathed in Will's scent, his fangs aching, and nuzzled his neck.

"Mmm…"

He kissed Will's jugular, feeling the pulsing blood beneath, and dragged more kisses up his chin until Will started to wake.

"Hannibal…"

Hannibal kissed him then, couldn't not, and Will's arms came around his neck freely before they parted. He smiled down at him, though Will probably couldn't see, and Will yawned.

“Now *that* was a good wakeup call.”

“I’m glad you approve.”

“I can’t see you but I know you’re smiling.”

He touched Will’s face again. “Yes, I am.”

“Did you sleep well? You were pretty much dead to the world, which I’m sure that’s how most vampires are during the day.”

“I slept very well, though now that I know you’re still here I’m tempted to just stay in bed till dawn.”

Will laughed. “It’s the nicest bed I’ve ever slept in so I wouldn’t say no.”

Hannibal pressed his lips to Will’s cheek. “I would ask you to stay forever but I’ve already said I wanted to savor the courting process before we...engaged in anything more.”

Will leaned over and turned on the bedside lamp and Hannibal lifted his head. His eyes were heavy lidded still, sleep had yet to completely leave him, and yet the desire in his gaze was obvious.

“That doesn’t mean I can’t stay for a few days,” he whispered, touching Hannibal’s face, “Right?”

“Will…”

“I want to thank you properly for getting someone to paint my porch and for letting me stay. I can do that, right?”

Hannibal's fangs felt heavy in his mouth. "I...don't see why not, but...I do believe I need to feed soon. This closeness is making it hard not to devour you."

Will smiled. "I'd let you, you know."

"Will...."

"Hannibal, I…"

He got up off the bed fast, using all the power he had to pull himself away, and rushed with inhuman speed down the stairs. The blood he had left in the refrigerator was ice cold but in his need he couldn't have cared less. He bit into a bag, the blood dripping down his night clothes, and ate like he hadn't in weeks until he let the empty bag fall to the floor.

His need for Will was growing so fast he was no longer sure an immortal life without him would be possible.

The sound of Will coming down the stairs made him pause but he didn't move. Will needed to see him like this. He stared at the blood on his hands and growled, licking the remains just as Will stepped into the kitchen.

"Oh."

Hannibal stared at him. "My need for you is growing but I will release you now if this...is too much. I quite understand if you can't…"

Will walked over without a word and picked up the fallen blood bag. He frowned. "It was cold?"

"I was quite...ravenous...in my need."

“If we were...mated...you’d take what you needed from me, right?”

“Yes,” Hannibal whispered, “With your permission, of course. There may be times when you’re not strong enough or not prepared for the loss. I would never feed from you without your permission, not even when we’re mated.”

Will tossed the bag in the trash bin, and turned to put both hands on Haninbal’s face.

“Look at me.”

“Will…”

“Please, Hannibal.”

He looked up just as Will kissed his bloody mouth. Hannibal growled ,pulling him closer, and Will splayed himself across him in offering moaning as he tasted the blood on his tongue.

This was his mate, he knew it with every part of his being, and Will never ceased to amaze him with each passing moment. He pressed Will against the refrigerator, growling, and kissed down his neck.

“Fuck, don’t stop, don’t…”

“I must,” Hannibal sighed, “It’s too soon and I don’t want…”

Will sighed when he lifted his head, and frowned. “I understand, I do, but...you know I really do like you, right? Like maybe it’s some sort of instinctual stuff but from the minute we met I liked you. I cared about you.”

“I know.”

“I’m sorry that I fucked things up in the beginning,” Will mumbled, kissing his cheek, “I won’t do it again.”

“Will…”

“Can I stay one more night? I don’t have to work and I just...I want to be here with you.”

Hannibal nuzzled his cheek. “I never want you to leave, Will. There’s no need to ask.”

Will laughed and kissed him again softly. “Good. Now that we’ve both had breakfast...what should we do?”

Hannibal wiped the blood from his chin. “I need to clean myself from this mess first but you’re more than welcome to just enjoy the house while I’m gone.”

Will smiled. “Okay.”

He forced himself away from Will again, this time not running, and went upstairs to shower. The warmth of the shower did little for him but the memories of his closeness with Will did nothing to quiet the desire that seemed to be rising inside. He began to jerk off, leaning against the tiles, and the memory of Will kissing his bloodied lips was the last thought he had before he succumbed spilling against the shower door.

Hannibal washed himself properly after, fangs aching, and went to get properly dressed for the evening. He put on one of his nicest suits, dark blue with silver inlays, and made certain he was perfect before heading downstairs.

Will had a book in his hand and was sitting on the couch. He looked quite at home in Hannibal’s house with his feet up and a glass of wine by his side.

“What are you reading?”

He held up the book.

Vampire Mating Rituals

Hannibal blinked. “I see.”

“It’s fascinating, actually,” he said, turning the book around, “It says here that mating rituals can sometimes end in fights for the vampire’s hand. Like true ‘to the death’ fights.”

“Yes, that’s...accurate.”

Will smiled. “So if the thing you had with Nigel turned out to be more I would’ve had to kill him to keep you?”

Hannibal bit his tongue and the drip of blood made him hungry again. “Yes, that’s...what would’ve happened.”

“Hmmm.”

“You seem pleased.”

“I mean, I was totally jealous of him, I’m not gonna lie. I wanted him gone. I’m not sure it would’ve gotten that far.”

Hannibal sat down beside him and Will moved in closer, laying his head in the crook of Hannibal’s arm. “Never say never.”

“Have you ever...seen that happen?”

“Vampires being fought over to the death? No, it’s….usually among those involved. But I’ve heard of it.”

“Oh.”

“Will…Nigel...that’s no longer an option for me. You know that, yes?”

Will smiled at him. “Yeah, I get it. You needed someone, and he was there.”

“But Nigel and I are acquaintances. You may see him again in the future.”

He sighed. “Yeah I assumed. Not this weekend though, right?”

“He may turn up on his own, but perhaps he’d pick up your scent and know when to go.”

Will frowned. “It’s fine if he does,” he mumbled, “I mean, you have friends. It’s fine. You just had sex with this one.”

“Yes.”

They were both quiet as Will turned the page, and the words at the top made Hannibal’s fangs ache again.

THE ACT

Will ran his fingers over the words. “The Act?”

“Of mating itself,” he growled, “It’s...often called The Act.”

“Oh, maybe I shouldn’t read this with you trying to keep us from moving too fast.”

“No, you…”

He closed the book and set it on the table before laying in Hannibal’s embrace once more. Hannibal pressed his nose to Will’s neck and breathed in hard growling. “You like how I smell.”

“Oh yes.”

“Is it the blood or…?”

“Just you,” Hannibal sighed, “It’s all you.”

“That’s good.”

“Will…”

“You know,” he whispered, “There are things we can do that *aren’t* full blown sex. I mean…”

Hannibal lifted his head. “If I touch any intimate part of your body, Will, I know I will not be able to stop myself from begging to give you my bite. This...this isn’t like me, but I...I want you more with each passing moment.”

“Hannibal…”

“I don’t want you to regret this,” he continued, “To regret...me.”

“That’s not…”

He pulled himself away, knowing it was better, and sighed. “If you’d like, we can go to your home and get you some clothes for tonight and tomorrow. Or anything else you might need.”

Will frowned and stood up with a sigh. “I can get my stuff by myself.”

“Will…”

“I’m not mad,” he said, turning to smile at him, “I just...I want you too, you know?”

“Yes, I know, but...please let me accompany you.”

Will laughed. “Nothing’s gonna happen if I walk just next door, Hannibal. They know better than to do anything when you might see them.”

“I’d feel much better if I was with you. Please?”

“Okay,” Will sighed, getting off the couch, “But like I said they’re not gonna do anything.”

“We shall see.”

Hannibal grabbed Will’s hand before they headed for the door, and his smile widened squeezing Hannibal’s hand.

“You really wanna piss them off, huh?”

He kissed Will’s hand softly. “I’m holding your hand because I want to, Will. If the neighbors see, well…it’s merely a bonus.”

Will laughed. “A huge one.”

They walked out the door together and didn’t let go. There was some light snow on the ground but not enough to matter, and as they headed for Will’s house he could feel eyes on them.

“We’re being watched,” Will said, “I saw Mrs. Komeda’s curtains move.”

He kissed Will’s hand again. “Good.”

They stepped up onto the porch and Will opened the door. He’d only been inside Will’s home once before and seeing it again reminded him of how bare it really was. Will didn’t seem to favor much more than the essentials, and it made him want to pamper Will as much as he could.

“I’ll be right back.”

“Alright.”

Hannibal walked through the living room to the kitchen and took in the decor. He caught sight of a few free magnets from the shelter Will worked for and even some dog magnets that he bought himself.

Will obviously loved these animals.

The job would be a thing he’d have to give up if they mated, as his instinct to protect Hannibal would make working during the day impossible. Hannibal frowned. Will had said before he didn’t have a dog of his own for a reason, but once he learned why perhaps he’d give him one as a mating gift.

He smiled at the idea.

Yes, that sounded like a very good plan.

Hannibal headed back out of the kitchen and was about to call out for Will when he heard a splat sound outside. He peeked out of the window and spotted a woman pelting eggs at Will's door. His anger made him growl and he ripped the door open fast, surprising her.

She was blonde, tall, and her blue eyes were wide as she stared at him. "I…Doctor Lecter…"

He rushed forward and smashed the half empty egg carton against the front of her shirt. "I remember you," he said, "Ms. Durand, yes?"

Michelle Durand whimpered. "I'm sorry I just…it's not fair! I met you first and he's…"

"Hannibal, let her go."

Hannibal turned to Will. "She was…"

Will sighed. "I know. Just…let her go."

He stepped back and Michelle ran off sobbing down the sidewalk.

"These people are childish brats. If it was my choice I'd…"

Will came up holding a duffle bag and kissed his cheek. "It's not legal to kill people for egging a house."

“Publicly no.”

He laughed. “Not privately either.”

“Hmm.”

“Come on back inside I’ll get some towels to clean this up.”

“ *She* should be cleaning this, not you.”

“Yeah well…it’ll piss them off more to see us do it together.”

Hannibal smiled. “Lead the way.”

It didn’t take very long for them to clean up the egg mess and soon they headed back for Hannibal’s home after sharing a kiss on the porch. He let Will inside first and locked the door behind them.

Hannibal kissed him again and Will wrapped his arms around him. “What was that for?”

He smiled. “Just for being you.”

Will blushed. “Oh.”

“Now let me make you dinner.”

“We can just…”

He kissed Will's cheek. "Please?"

"Ok."

Will sat at the counter while he cooked and Hannibal enjoyed being watched. It was a simple dinner, mostly remnants of the last few things he'd made himself, and the meat they shared in close sitting side by side.

"Amazing," Will sighed, "Just…"

"Perfect."

They smiled at each other again and Will wiped blood from Hannibal's mouth licking his finger. "You took the words right out of my mouth."

Hannibal licked his lips. "I don't want this night to end."

"Neither do I."

He sighed. "I want to tell you not to share my bed again but my own selfishness makes it hard to say."

"Then don't," Will whispered, "I can keep my hands to myself."

"I'm no longer sure I want you to."

"Hannibal…"

He smashed their mouths together and Will climbed in his lap, shaking as Hannibal ripped open his trousers and shoved his hand inside. He moaned as Will fought to fight the same, growling as they stroked each other, and bit Will's tongue just as his orgasm ripped through him. Will cried out and spilled into his palm, making him suckle his tongue harder until the tremors of their passion subsided.

Will pulled away first, gasping for air, and smiled at him.

"Was that intent?"

"Oh yes."

He lifted his hand and licked it while he stared at Hannibal.

Hannibal growled and did the same.

"There," Will teased, "Now sharing a bed again won't be so hard."

He laughed. "We shall see."

They went to bed that night together, Will's arms around him from behind, and as he fell into his sunlight hibernation he felt safer than ever before.

Will might not yet be his mate but he would be.

Soon.

Chapter 9

Will woke up to the sound of his cell phone ringing in the middle of the next afternoon, and sighed reaching for the bedside table.

It had to be Bev.

She had to know he was staying at Hannibal's so he wasn't sure why she'd wake him up when it was still light outside. He reached for the phone and frowned when he saw who was calling.

It was work.

He sat up on the edge of the bed, still tired as he turned on the lamp, and answered. "Hello?"

"So he is alive," Shelly said, "Did you forget to come in today?"

Will scratched the back of his head. "I...yeah."

"Well, I'll let you off this time but…"

"I quit," he said, unable to keep the words out of his mouth.

Shelly was quiet on the other end. "What?"

"I...I think I quit."

“Will, you’ve worked here for five years! You can’t just…”

Will smiled. “I think I just did, Shelly,” he laughed, “I...I think I just did.”

“You have to give two weeks' notice! I can’t just have no one here!”

“I can’t,” he said, “I...I really can’t, and I’m not sorry.”

He hung up the phone and blinked back tears, looking over his shoulder at Hannibal sound asleep.

“Fuck,” he whispered, “Fuck, I…”

Will left the bedroom and dialed Bev, who answered on the third ring.

“HE LIVES! You better have a good story for me because I just told my boss I have a family emergency so I could answer this call.”

He sat on Hannibal’s couch, still smiling, and leaned his head back against the cushions.

“I quit my job.”

“WHAT?”

“I forgot to go to work today, after hanging out here and I just...I talked to Shelly and I...I quit.”

“Will, does this mean…”

Will nodded. “Yeah, I...I think I...I know.”

Bev didn’t say anything at first, and he frowned. “Bev?”

“I mean, it’s a big deal. You really like him, I know you do, but what if you get into this and it’s just not…”

Will laughed. “You’re the one who pushed me toward him! Now you think I’m gonna change my mind?”

“Yes! No! I...maybe? I just want you to be sure this is what you want. A super long life taking care of someone you only see half the time.”

He smiled as he put a hand on his neck. “I know.”

“But?”

“But...I do want it, I really do. I know I do.”

“Will..”

“I think I’m in love, Bev. Nothing else matters except being around him as much as I possibly can.”

She sniffled. “Oh god, this is the most romantic thing that’s ever happened to me and it’s not even about me.”

Will laughed. “Does that mean you’re happy?”

“I’m totally jealous that you’re gonna live forever with a hot vampire husband but...I’m happy for you, Graham.”

“Thank you. I just hope the rest of the block leaves us alone.”

“If they don’t, they’ll have to answer to me.”

“Bev…”

“Those jealous bitches, they’re just...Will...are you sure about this?”

Will looked around the empty room, and the sudden ache to check on Hannibal was so strong he blinked back tears. “I’m..I feel so sure.”

“Ok,” she said, “Okay. I gotta go.”

“Okay.”

“I love you, Graham.”

“I love you, Bev.”

“I’m coming over after work and meeting your new husband.”

“Bev, he’s not…”

She ended the call and he set the phone down with a sigh.

Was he really ready for this?

He felt like he was, but maybe that's just because he'd been around Hannibal for so long. There was so much responsibility in becoming a vampire's mate along with the good things, and he could easily mess it up.

Will closed his eyes and sighed.

Hannibal was the one who'd been holding back. If Will suddenly started to push, maybe he'd change his mind.

He started to think of every worst case scenario in his head and got lost in the negatives, when there was a knock at the door.

Will frowned.

Who would be coming to Hannibal's house during the day?

He got up and went to the door expecting to have to yell at one of the other people on the block when he's surprised at who it was. Will opened the door and Nigel smiled at him.

"Can I come in, Shovel Man?"

Will glared at him. "Hannibal's sleeping."

“I’m not here to see him.”

“I don’t know who you’re here for then.”

“I came to see you. I thought we could have a chat.”

Will scoffed. “No, thank you.”

“Fangs and I are good friends, so it’s only natural that you…”

“No.”

“C’mon, Shovel Man. Just one afternoon tea.”

“No, I really…”

Nigel walked right in, pushing past him, and Will snarled, pushing him up against the door.

“I SAID NO!”

Nigel blinked at him in surprise. “Ohhh....would you look at that?”

Will panted as he glared at him, digging his nails into Nigel’s chest, but didn't let go. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“Fangs’ got himself a mate,” he whispered, stepping back, “I didn’t think you were that far in yet.”

He put a hand on the door, trying to calm down, and glared at Nigel still. “I don’t know what you’re…”

Nigel stepped forward twice more and Will got so irrationally upset he threw himself at him, nearly knocking Nigel off his feet, but he grabbed Will in a laugh.

“You’re so adorable,” he laughed, “I can see why he likes you so much. So fucking fierce. I’ll go, Shovel Man, just to make you happy. But...I’ll say one thing to you now. Be good to Fangs, ok? He’s one of the good ones, and...he really needs someone good.”

Will blinked back tears. “I know.”

Nigel pulled out a cigarette and put it into his mouth. “I know I’ll probably never find a mate,” he sighed, “But...if I do? I hope they’re just as loyal as you are, Shovel Man. See you around.”

He watched him go, heart still beating wildly, and nearly collapsed when he shut the door.

Will locked everything and sat there shaking on the ground.

“He’s mine,” he whispered to no one, though it felt so good to say, “All mine.”

He sat in front for hours after, the protective need too strong, and when Hannibal came in to find him there he frowned at him.

“Will?”

Will looked up at him, relieved, and Hannibal dropped to his knees to touch his face. “You’re awake.”

“Yes, I...how long have you been sitting here?”

Will blinked. “I...I don’t know.”

Hannibal sniffed the air, paused, and kissed his cheek. “Nigel was here?”

“You can smell him?” Will said, feeling angry at the very idea.

“Yes, I...you’re angry about that.”

“I just...can you tell when I’ve been somewhere?”

“Oh yes,” Hannibal said, sitting down now as he took Will’s hand, “I can detect your scent more than I can pick up Nigel’s.”

“Oh.”

He kissed Will’s hand. “Did he upset you?”

“I...I think I upset myself.”

“I’m...not quite sure I understand.”

Will took his other hand and brought it to his lips smiling. “I already kinda thought I was sure before he came but after...I think I’m sure now.”

“Will…”

“I quit my job today.”

Hannibal’s eyes widened. “You...quit your job?”

“Yeah,” he said, shaking, “I...I quit my job.”

“Will, that’s...a very big decision to make on a whim.”

Will shook his head. “I don’t...I don’t think it was on a whim. I...I just...it felt right.”

“Will, it’s very early on in our courting and…”

He crawled closer, shaking his head, and put both hands on Hannibal’s face. “No! No, it’s...Hannibal...I *know* .”

Hannibal’s eyes filled with tears. “Will, once we’re mated it cannot be taken back. You must be very sure that’s what you want.”

He nodded. “I *know* .”

“WIll…”

He kissed him hard then, couldn’t not, and Hannibal growled pulling him up into his lap. Will felt like he was burning, the need was so great, and when they pulled apart again he had tears on his face.

“There are...many things that must happen before to be sure conditions are...adequate.”

Will laughed. “Okay.”

“And you...you must…”

“I’ll do whatever you tell me. Today I was ready to get into a fight with a werewolf, so...I’m pretty much open to anything.”

Hannibal blinked, his fangs showing as his mouth hung open. “You fought Nigel?”

“I was….he pushed his way into the house and I...I just…”

“Will, that’s...a very intense declaration.”

“I *know* ,” he whispered, “And I told Bev I was...in love with you.”

“Will…”

Will shook his head. “I don’t want to wait anymore, Hannibal. Just tell me what I need to do.”

Hannibal let out a deep sigh. “I’ll make a list of what you need to eat tomorrow, and...you need to find a gift to give me on our mating night.”

“That’s all?”

“I will need to fast for twenty four hours before, so that my body is empty for your blood.”

Will licked his lips. “That’s...I mean…you have that kind of restraint?”

“I’ll need to give you some of my blood, but you’ll need to be at a high blood flow level. It will be very...intense. I don’t wish to frighten you.”

He kissed him softly. “You couldn’t scare me if you tried.”

“No?” Hannibal asked.

“Nope,” he whispered, “I’ve seen a lot of shit and I...I could never be scared of you.”

Hannibal showed Will his fangs and all it did was make Will’s cock twitch. “I will...take that as a challenge.”

Will grinned. “I can’t wait to see you try.”

He puts his hands on Will’s face, eyes shining with tears, and let out a sigh.

“Tomorrow evening,” he said, “We can....unite.”

Will’s skin felt tingly all over.

“Another proviso,” Hannibal whispered, “We cannot...touch each other sexually until tomorrow.”

He groaned. “Seriously?”

“Yes.”

“That...you’re sure all that isn’t...risky?”

Hannibal kissed his cheek and whispered in his ear. “That’s what makes matings so intense, Will. If they were just under normal conditions...they wouldn’t be very sacred. Now would they?”

Will wrapped his arms around Hannibal’s neck. “I guess not.”

He pulled back to smile at him. “I...I was remiss earlier,” Hannibal whispered, “During your declaration.”

“What?” Will said, blushing, “No, it’s…”

“I find myself falling more and more in love with you every minute we spend together. I’ve never been more grateful that you shoveled my driveway to get us where we are now.”

Will buried his face into Hannibal’s neck. “You’ll never let me live that down, huh?”

“No,” Hannibal whispered into his ear, “Not now and not ever.”

He smiled. “Good.”

Chapter 10

Hannibal woke hungry.

He forced his body to calm, taking a breath, and walked out into the hall only to pause. The scent of blood made his fangs ache, and he almost thought to return to his slumber for fear he'd harm Will but pushed on.

Will was sitting in the living room reading, lost in whatever world he'd fallen into, and the urge to run to him was strong.

"Will."

He looked up and frowned. "You look like you're in pain."

Hannibal shook his head. "I just...need to adjust."

"I can go," Will said, standing, "I…"

"No!" he yelled, shaking, "I...I'm still just...fine."

"Hannibal…"

"Did you follow the list I gave you?"

Will nodded. "Yes."

“And the gift?”

He smiled. “Yes.”

Hannibal smiled back. “You seem pleased about your choice.”

“I am,” he said, standing, “Are you?”

“My gift...comes after.”

“Oh.”

“You said you’d read about matings, I just…”

“No, I did, I…” Will sighed, “Sorry it’s all a blur, I’m just really eager.”

Hannibal stepped closer, the hunger building, and Will’s heart began to beat faster.

“I can smell it on you,” he said, “The food you’ve had, it...speeds up blood flow.”

“Yeah, I know.”

He knelt at Will’s feet, taking his hands, and Will frowned down at him. “You’re quite certain this is what you want?”

“Hannibal…”

“I would not fault you for wanting to wait longer,” he said, though his hunger stabbed away at him, “I...I…”

Will held out his wrist. “Do it,” he said, “Just…”

“Will…”

“I’m so ready, Hannibal, I just...I haven’t stopped thinking about this all day. I don’t think I’ve ever been so desperate for anything in my entire life.”

“Will, it’s not...this is not how it begins.”

Will stood up, nearly falling over the couch, and grabbed something from against the wall.

“I know,” he said, voice shaking, “That’s why...I kept your gift close.”

The loud clang as his gift fell between them seemed to echo around the room.

It was a snow shovel.

Hannibal smiled.

“This is what you thought I needed?”

Will knelt down on the floor and held the shovel out with both hands. “Yeah,” he said, “Don’t you?”

“Will…”

“I love you, Hannibal,” he said, “Just...stop overthinking and...just…” he let out a long breath, “Take.”

Hannibal took the shovel in his hands, blinking back tears, “It’s...perfect.”

“Hannibal…”

He looked up to see Will still kneeling, arms open, and on the verge of tears.

“Once we begin, we cannot stop,” he said, his voice shaking, “This...this is...forever.”

Will smiled. “It’s been forever since that first day, hasn’t it?”

Hannibal pulled hard on his shirt, smashing their mouths together, and the taste of Will’s kiss made him glad they were already on the floor. Will moaned, clutching at his neck, and the sound of his blood rushing only fueled Hannibal’s hunger.

He pulled back, panting, and knew by the look in Will’s eyes that his eyes were red. Will reached out to touch his face, cheeks flushed, and smiled. “I think we maybe should move this into the bedroom.”

“I’m finding it hard to hold myself back at the moment, I’m unsure if I can wait much longer.”

“I think you can,” Will said, taking his hand, “You told me you had a lot of restraint.”

“Will…”

“C’mon,” Will breathed, pulling him away from the couch, “The sooner we get there the faster we’re…”

He quickly lifted Will up into his arms, making him laugh, and rushed them up the stairs all the way to his bedroom. The hunger didn’t wane, not even a little, and as he let Will down onto the bed the sight of him only increased his need.

“How are we doing this?” Will asked, “I mean...I know things are gonna get a little bit...rough.”

“I will not hurt you,” Hannibal growled, “I refuse…”

Will shook his head. “That’s not...I just mean...you’re gonna get bitey, I’m gonna get bloody, and we’re both already so desperate for each other I’m not sure we’ll last very long.”

Hannibal let out a breath. “Yes, I...agree.”

“So…”

“Come to the edge of the bed,” Hannibal whispered, “Please.”

Will nodded, scooting down until his legs were hanging off the bed, and Hannibal lifted his wrist up to bite down. He hissed, and Will stared as the blood ran down his arm.

“You need to feed from me,” he said, “And then I...will feed from you.”

“And then?”

“Then we’ll feed from one another again after we’ve...joined our blood.”

“And the sex?”

“Consummation is...a key factor in the ritual as blood is always the sweetest at the moment of completion.”

“Oh.”

He held out his wrist and Will took his in both hands staring up at him.

“Drink.”

Will pressed his lips up against Hannibal’s wound and began to suck.

He growled as he watched, the sensation of Will feeding making his whole body ache, and when he gently pushed him back there was blood on Will’s lips.

“Is that enough?” he asked, breathless.

“No, I just...it’s getting difficult to…”

Will pulled his shirt off, working at his jeans, and Hannibal’s growl only intensified.

“Take off your clothes, Hannibal,” he said, kicking off his pants, “Before…”

Hannibal tore at his shirt, buttons flying, and Will was almost entirely naked as he did the same to his trousers. He lunged at him, shaking with need, and pressed Will down onto the bed.

“Hannibal…”

He moved his wrist up again, blood dripping down Will’s chest, and when Will began to suckle his cock was so hard he knew he would not last long.

Not tonight.

The blood that dripped down Will’s mouth only made his mouth water, and when he pulled his wrist back he grabbed Will’s arm in return.

“Fuck,” Will gasped, “Hannibal, please…”

He bit down hard, the sudden hiss from Will quickly turning into an almost purr, and as he drank Will’s blood every part of him knew he’d never be able to taste any other again. This was his, always, and as Will groaned he only wanted more.

“Fuck, fuck...I...I’m….”

Hannibal pulled his mouth away to smash their mouths together once more, the taste of their joined blood only making him want more. He bit Will’s tongue and the shudder he got in response only made his frenzy worse.

He pulled back, shaking, and stared down into Will’s beautiful eyes. “I love you,” he confessed, “I cannot imagine doing this with anyone else.”

Will smiled. “You’d better not, I’m ready for forever and you’re not getting rid of me.”

Hannibal began to kiss down his chest, licking the remnants of spilled blood until he tore off Will’s briefs. The shocked laughter as he began to lick Will’s hardness brought him at ease,

and every moan he got in return only spurred him on.

“So good,” Will sighed, “So...god...I’ve...I’ve never…”

He wanted to bite, suck, and take everything but refrained, pulling himself back to lick down Will’s backside. Hannibal lifted up, licking and plunging his tongue inside until Will cried out in pleasure.

“Oh god, fuck me, just...fuck me, please I need…”

Hannibal lifted his legs up before plunging inside, and Will’s groans made him pull his mate closer. He smashed their mouths together again, desperate to taste, and with every undulation Will’s body quivered in response.

He could smell how close Will was, hear the rush of blood to his lower half, and when he pulled back he was gasping in need. “When I bite, you bite,” he growled, his voice coming out a warbled mess, “Do you understand?”

“Bite,” Will gasped, “Bite you and…”

“Be locked together forever.”

Will had tears in his eyes. “Please,” he gasped, “I’m so close, Hannibal I…”

Hannibal pulled out only to thrust in again, making Will cry out, and as his thrusts became more erratic he stared into Will’s eyes.

“Mine,” he growled, “M…”

Will pulled him closer, nails digging into his neck, and bit down. Hannibal did the same, unsure, but the sensation of the bite only fueled his own release as Will spilled between them. He could feel their connection form, Will shaking as waves of pleasure continued, and when Will screamed around the blood in his mouth Hannibal had tears running down his face.

I'll never let you go.

The words echoed in his mind as he collapsed, filled with so much pleasure he fought to keep his eyes open, and when he lifted his head he stared down into Will's eyes.

His glowing blue eyes.

"How do you feel?"

Will let out a laugh, reaching out to touch his cheek.

"I feel like I could shovel a million driveways," he teased, as Hannibal pressed their foreheads together.

They laid together, basking in the afterglow, and every touch between them felt like sparks of pleasure that would never end.

"I love you," he whispered, kissing Will's wound, now already healing, "Very, very much."

Will ran fingers through his hair. "I love you too, I...I can't believe I almost said no to this. It's...this is…"

Hannibal lifted his head and smiled. "Good?"

He shook his head. “Not just good, it’s...perfect.”

Perfect.

That was the word.

Just...perfect.

Chapter 11

The bond was so strong that Will found it hard not to check on Hannibal several times when he woke up later the next afternoon. His whole body felt stronger, faster, lighter, and oddly he barely ate.

He read up more on bonds, human vampire ones to be specific, and the whole life in general than he had in the days before which probably was a bit useless now. Most humans who were bonded to vampires lived a sort of hybrid life, caught between the two worlds, but it was a happy one.

Or so they said.

Bonded humans ate a lot less than regular ones, though they periodically shared the blood of their bonded. There were parts he didn't quite understand, probably because his whole being seemed to miss Hannibal while he was asleep. He laid next to Hannibal several times before nightfall, some even falling asleep alongside him, but always woke to him still asleep.

This was the life he'd wanted, he knew, but still he missed him.

Hannibal woke the minute the darkness came, and Will was beside him staring down in wait.

He frowned. "Will?"

"Maybe you should just make me a vampire," he sighed, "I missed you so much while you were asleep it…"

Hannibal pulled him into a kiss, his hands making Will whimper as they touched him, and when they parted his frown seemed deeper.

"It's been less than a day, Will."

“I know, but…”

“Your adjustment can take time,” he said, touching Will’s cheek, “And...I thought you were certain this is what you wanted.”

“It *is* , I just…”

“If we’re both vampires,” he said, frowning still, “Who is to protect us?”

“Nigel?”

Hannibal smiled.

“I have a feeling he’ll be busy, and your territorial nature would make it difficult.”

Will sighed, laying on him. “I know.”

“Vampire human bonds can be difficult,” he said, running fingers through Will’s hai, “But...you can feel me, yes? Know I’m safe?”

“Yeah, all day I could, it's just...I missed you.”

“I know, Mylimasis, I know.”

“And that was *one day* ,” Will said, lifting his head, “This is gonna be everyday, and I just…”

Hannibal touched his face again. “I chose you, Will, because I trust you with all of me. Do you understand that?”

“I know.”

“And do you trust me?”

“With my life,” Will said, moving in closer, “With...all of me.”

Hannibal kissed him again softly. “I’ve spent a very long time alone,” he whispered, “But...the bond makes us stronger. Not just you, me as well. I feel secure knowing you’re here.”

“I love you,” Will said, “I…”

“I love you,” Hannibal whispered, “And I know it’s difficult, I know things are going to take time, but I want you to let things settle.”

“Just for a few days, can we just...can we sleep at the same time?”

Hannibal frowned. “I suppose.”

Will climbed over, straddling him, and he watched his mouth open just enough to show his fangs. “I can still protect you if I’m sleeping beside you.”

“Will…”

He ran his hand down Hannibal’s bare chest. “Do I get my gift today?”

“Yes,” Hannibal growled, as Will lifted up, pulling his pants down with ease.

He was naked underneath his sweats, desperate to be close, and when Hannibal thrust up he cried out in pleasure.

“Will….”

“Fuck me,” he sighed, “Fuck…”

Hannibal moved slowly, deliberately, and even when Will tried to ride him he slowed things down. Will whimpered in frustration, needy, and when Hannibal finally started to touch him he cried out so loudly it echoed off the walls.

“Hannibal!”

He hoped it was heard outside, wondered what all the desperate people on the block would think, and the satisfaction of knowing he was the one Haninbal chose made Will come with a sudden rush. Will spilled across Hannibal’s bare chest, groaning, and when Hannibal shot up to bite his neck he felt tears run down his cheeks.

“ *Mine* ,” he growled in Will’s head.

“Yours,” Will sighed, echoing the words back.

Hannibal came when Will bit him back, not sharp enough to break skin, but it was enough. He shuddered as he came, digging his nails into Will’s back, and when they parted Will kissed the blood from his lips.

He touched Will’s cheek.

“The satisfaction of seeing your eyes glow blue is...everything. You’re really mine.”

Will smiled. “I never thought I’d think glowy eyes were hot but…”

Hannibal laughed.

They collapsed together, just laying there, and soon got up to shower. Will felt the urge to wash Hannibal, bit by bit, and Hannibal did the same before they got dressed.

“I have plans for us this evening,” he said, “I made the reservations last night while you slept.”

“I passed out that much more before you?”

“Much more,” Hannibal teased.

He blushed. “It took a lot out of me I guess.”

Hannibal kissed his cheek. “And put much in you.”

Will laughed.

They left the house together, barely able to be more than a few inches apart, and Will was practically skipping as they went down the steps. “I can feel your happiness in the bond,” Hannibal said, “It’s...the best feeling I’ve ever had in my entire life.”

Will smiled. “I love you too.”

A loud cough made them both turn to see Mrs. Komeda standing there with a bouquet of flowers. Will’s eyes narrowed, stepping in front of Hannibal, and he knew by the way her eyes widened that his eyes were glowing.

“Oh! I...I see you’ve...bonded.”

“What do you want?”

“I was coming to apologize.”

Will laughed. “To who?”

“Dr. Lecter is…”

He didn’t move. “You defaced my home, insulted me, and threatened me, but you’re here to apologize to Hannibal?”

She backed away. “I didn’t...I was relegated the official speaker of the block.”

Will felt a sudden rush as he was right in front of her, surprising even himself, and he grabbed the flowers, tossing them as far as he possibly could. Which happened to be all the way across the street.

“We don’t want your apology,” he growled, “Get away from my mate, and never talk to us again.”

Mrs. Komeda said nothing, just turned to walk away, and when he was certain she left Will let out a long breath. Hannibal came up and hugged him from behind.

“Will….”

“I’m fine.”

“No, you’re not.”

“Let’s just go to dinner, or whatever, I…”

Hannibal turned him, frowning. “We can stay home, if you’d like.”

“And miss my present?”

“We can go another time.”

“Hannibal…”

“I don’t want her to ruin this moment for us.”

Will smiled and kissed him softly. “It won’t,” he promised, “Now...where are we going?”

Hannibal smiled. “I want to take you to the animal shelter so we can get a canine companion.”

Will froze. “What?”

“You obviously quite like dogs,” he said, “And...I’m not certain what’s kept you from getting one for yourself but…”

He frowned. “I...I’m not…”

“Or not,” Hannibal said, “Will, it was merely…”

Will sighed. “My history with dogs is not the best.”

“Why?”

“I had a dog as a kid and he got run over, and I had one in college and he got into the neighbor’s yard and bit someone who made such a fuss that they...put him down to see if he had rabies. It’s just…”

“Will,” Hannibal whispered, pulling him into a hug, “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s fine.”

“No, it’s not.”

“Hannibal…”

“We’re going to get you a canine, Will, and no harm will come to it. You have my word.”

“You can’t know that.”

Hannibal pulled back to smile at him. “Can’t I?”

Will blinked. “You’re gonna make me a vampire dog?”

“Not exactly.”

“Hannibal…”

“Come now,” he said, stepping back, “Let’s go find your canine.”

“Explain to me what we’re about to do.”

“I’ll tell you in the car.”

Will laughed. “Okay, but you’d better have a good explanation.”

They got into the car together, and Will could not stop smiling as they pulled out of the driveway. He leaned on Hannibal, who took his hand, and as they drove he had tears in his eyes.

“I love you so much.”

“I love you too, Will.”

He sighed.

“How are you gonna make sure my dog doesn’t die?”

“I will merely murder anyone who tries to harm it, and...once it’s of age we’ll begin feeding it my blood to make it immortal alongside you.”

Will laughed.

“And have it attack people when it starts to crave blood?”

“We can feed it bloody meat, and the occasional human. We’ll see how that goes.”

Will shook his head. “I want to say you’re kidding but...I can feel you’re not.”

Hannibal smiled.

“Perhaps your canine will make you less lonely when I’m asleep.”

Will squeezed his hand. “Probably not,” he whispered, “I’ll still miss you.”

Hannibal sighed. “All I want is you to be happy, Will.”

“I know, Hannibal.”

“That’s all I want for the both of us.”

Will laid his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. “I am happy,” he whispered, “I am.”

“I want you to be happy always.”

Will frowned. “I know.”

They pulled up to the animal shelter where a woman came right out. She had blonde hair, blue eyes, and her smile was warm.

“Hello! You must be Hannibal and Will. I’m Molly, I run Foster Shelter.”

Will leaned forward to shake her hand but Hannibal held him back, growling.

“Um….”

She smiled. “It’s ok,” she said, her eyes suddenly bright yellow, “He told me you were mating, so….come on in.”

The shelter was one floor and several rooms but the minute they walked into the dog room Will saw the one he wanted.

“And Winston here…”

Will got on his knees and put a hand through Winston’s cage.

“He was a give back,” she sighed, “A bit too aggressive when it came to his owners having people come by. I think maybe he just wants to protect the people he loves, you know?”

Will looked up from the floor at Hannibal. “This one. I want this one.”

Winston licked his hand and Will laughed.

“Hey buddy,” he whispered, “You wanna come home with us?”

Molly opened the cage and Winston rushed right at Will, who laughed as he licked his face.

“He’s perfect,” Hannibal said, “Start the paperwork up, please.”

“Right away.”

Molly left them alone and he got on his knees by Will, and Winston seemed a bit more wary but let Hannibal pet him.

“One big happy family,” he said, “I think...you’ll be a very good companion.”

Winston rubbed his hand and Will felt his chest ache.

“A vampire mate, and a vampire dog. What could possibly go wrong?”

Hannibal smiled. “I think you mean... *right* , Will. What if things went perfectly...right?”

Will grinned and kissed him softly.

“Yeah, I...I think that’s...perfect.”

They both were surprised when Winston laid his head right over their knees. Hannibal pet him again.

“Do you like your gift?”

“I love him,” Will whispered, kissing his cheek.

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

“Now, let’s...go home.”

“I thought…”

“I think perhaps we should eat in tonight.”

Molly came walking back, leash in hand, and Will looked down at Winston again.

“Sounds good to me.”

Chapter 12

Hannibal had always wondered what it would feel like to be bonded.

His parents had been bonded, a strong connection that often even flowed to him and his sister in times of great distress, but once they were gone he wasn't sure he wanted to be close to someone like that again.

Then a human shoveled his driveway.

It was remarkable how flattered he'd been, how excited, and the connection to Will even as a stranger was so immediate he should've known they were meant to be together. Now that they were bonded, and Will's glowing blue eyes gave him such happiness to see even when they appeared in anger, the flow of their bond was so strong he often wondered just how he'd gone through immortality without him.

Will's initial worry at being alone while he slept still persisted even weeks later, to a point where they compromised. Will did not go to bed most nights till he did now, and slept till mid-day beside him. Their connection was strong enough, he reasoned, that if there was a threat Will would instantly wake.

Which is exactly what happened seventeen days into their bond.

The neighborhood anger over Will "winning" his hand had somewhat cooled by then, though the dirty looks he'd received moving his things over to Hannibal's made it obvious they were not exactly gone. Hannibal still often felt eyes on him when he did go out to work, though no one dared try to approach him.

Will's home was set to go on the market soon, a thorough cleansing having just been finished, and as they both tired from an intense session of lovemaking he was happier than he'd ever been.

“Did you let the dog out?” Will yawned, “I don’t want him to pee on the rug again.”

“Yes, Will,” he whispered, kissing his cheek, “Winston is fed, watered, and has done his business. I made certain before we…retired.”

Will smiled. “Retired? I still have to get used to the ‘old’ speech.”

“It’s not old.”

“No one says ‘retired’ for sleep other than vampires or people who were alive during the first world war.”

Hannibal lifted his head up to smile at him. “Are you calling me old, Will?”

“You know you’re old.”

“I’m offended, Mylimasis,” he whispered, touching Will’s cheek, “Just because you’re new at immortality does not mean you can poke fun at those who aren’t.”

Will leaned down to kiss him, still smiling. “I’m sorry, love,” he said, his eyes glowing blue, “Forgive me?”

“You’re forgiven. I was merely teasing.”

“I know,” Will said, laying down on his chest again, “We’re bonded, remember?”

“As if I could forget.”

He felt Will's body relax against him and ran fingers through his hair. "Goodnight, Will."

"I'm not…I'm fine."

"I can feel your tiredness, Mylimasis. Just sleep."

"But…"

"Sleep, Will."

The silence that followed made him smile, and soon he let his own body go into hibernation. It was not as if he'd felt so completely vulnerable before now, but knowing Will was there to fight anyone who dared come for him made things much easier.

Hannibal did not expect to wake again until that very next sundown.

And instead woke to Will's shallow breathing, rushed whispers, and distress while the sun was still out. His body felt the foreign nature of his waking, sore in places he hadn't been in centuries, and his eyes hurt when he opened them. The scent of blood was in the air, not only Will's but others, and his fear rose.

"Will?"

"Go back to sleep," Will whispered, his voice shaking, "I'm fine."

Hannibal tried to move but Will held him down. "Will, why am I awake before sundown? Your distress…"

Will buried his face into Hannibal's neck. "You need to go back to sleep, Hannibal. It's not important now."

“Will, let go of me.”

“Hannibal, please just…”

He pushed Will off, growling, and sat up to look at him.

And felt instantly terrified.

Will had cuts and bruises on his face along with drying blood on his arms.

“Will, what’s happened? Who…”

He threw himself at Hannibal, shaking, and said nothing for what felt like eons.

“Someone sent us a gift,” he whispered, “Or really I guess me.”

“What?”

“A werewolf came to hurt me,” Will growled, “I don’t know who but…you don’t think Nigel would do this?”

“Nigel? Of course not. You told me he was happy that you and I were going to mate.”

Will clutched him. “Maybe it was for you, then?”

“Me?”

“I was sound asleep when Winston started to bark, and I just…the minute they came upstairs I shot up from the bed. I…I’ve never felt that kind of strength before.”

Hannibal rubbed his back. “And?”

“I ran down the stairs and found him fighting off Winston.”

“Is he…?”

“He’s fine,” Will mumbled, “He bit him first, and the wolf…whoever he was…didn’t get a chance to hurt him. I got there in time. He’s over there.”

Hannibal turned to where Will pointed and saw Winston sleeping on a pillow in the corner of their bedroom.

“And?”

“The body is downstairs.”

Hannibal lifted Will’s chin up from his neck, and the tears in Will’s eyes made him so severely angry.

Someone had tried to hurt his mate.

“We must call Nigel.”

“I was gonna but…I had to be sure you were ok.”

Hannibal bit and held out his wrist for Will, who frowned. “Drink.”

“You’re awake too early, Hannibal, it’s not…”

“I will not allow you to suffer in pain if I could remedy it. Please, Will.”

Will sucked his wrist, eyes glowing blue as tears filled them, and when he pulled back the marks on his skin were already fading. He kissed Hannibal then, and Hannibal dug his nails into Will’s back to pull him closer.

Mine

All yours

They made love like starving men, Hannibal biting and marking him everywhere he could, and when they were done his body ached still but he made no move to hibernate again.

“I love you, Will. I...I love you very, very much.”

Will hugged him tight. “I love you too.”

He called Nigel while they were still basking in the afterglow.

“Shovel Man, why are you using…”

“Nigel, it’s me.”

Nigel paused.

“Fangs? It’s…not even noon. How the fuck are you awake?”

“We had an incident. Are you free to come?”

Another pause.

“How many?”

“Just one…of yours.”

Nigel growled. “I’ll be there soon.”

They showered together after, Will washing him and even once helping him stand.

“You really need to go back to…”

“No, Will. No.”

Will helped him get dressed, still worried, and they went downstairs with Winston who stuck close. Hannibal could smell the blood the minute they walked halfway down the stairs, and his anger rose when he saw just how much Will had fought. Pictures, decor, and even shelves were knocked over onto the ground. The werewolf’s body was in the living room, lying face first with a knife stuck in his back.

“Will….”

“I’m fine,” Will said, “I…I need to cover the windows. Just…stay here.”

The sun wasn’t directly hitting him but Hannibal’s body was still sore from not finishing his hibernation. He watched Will rush back up the stairs, coming back down with blankets, and tossing them over the windows until the room was dark.

He relaxed, sitting down in the dining room, and Will moved their chairs close together.

“Here,” Will said, holding out his arm, “Drink.”

“No.”

“Hannibal…”

He put a hand on Will’s cheek. “Of the two of us, you are right now much stronger. I’d prefer if it you stayed that way.”

“But…”

Hannibal kissed his cheek. “I’m fine.”

Nigel arrived not long after, looking angrier than Hannibal had ever seen.

“What the fuck?” he growled, running over to the body.

“Do you know them?”

“Yeah,” he sighed, “Grizz. He’s a low life who comes into the bar sometimes. He’ll do anything for money.”

“Anything?”

He locked eyes with Hannibal. “Wait, why the hell are you awake?”

“I was…alerted to Will’s distress.”

“Shit, you really should go back to sleep. Shovel Man and I…”

“You’re certain this wolf would’ve done whatever was asked of him for money?”

Nigel nodded. “Yeah.”

“And he…”

Will sighed. “We get it, he was hired. What we don’t get is who they wanted to hurt and why?”

Nigel walked over to Hannibal’s liquor cabinet, grabbed a bottle, and opened it without bothering to ask. He winced at the year, and the cost, but didn’t argue. Nigel was here to help them.

A few thousand dollars wouldn’t break him.

He sat down with a sigh. “Did he say anything, Shovel Man?”

Will shook his head. “No. I just heard the dog bark and then I…I just knew something was wrong.”

“He didn’t try to pass you? Try to get to Fangs?”

Will tensed. “Um…no.”

“Then he was here for you.”

Hannibal growled. “It has to be one of them,” he hissed.

Nigel looked between them. “The who?”

“There were many other interested parties when I arrived in the neighborhood. Many humans who wanted to…”

Will grabbed the bottle Nigel had in front of him and took a long drink. “Monster fuckers,” he said, his eyes glowing.

“Aww, I was right! You mated! Cheers.”

“Oh yes,” Hannibal said, “We…we’ve been mated for a few weeks now.”

“So it’s pissing off the soccer moms?”

Will frowned. “I’m not sure…”

“Will, who else would want to kill you?”

He sighed. “I don’t know.”

Nigel got up and bent down to check Grizz’s pockets while Will left the room. Hannibal closed his eyes, the sun still upsetting him, and when someone sat down again he knew it was Will.

“Here,” he mumbled, “If you won’t drink mine, drink this.”

The blood was from the refrigerator, still cold, and yet Hannibal drank it gladly. A shiver ran through him, but it helped a bit. “Thank you.”

Will kissed his cheek, and put an arm around his back. “You really think Mrs. Komeda and the monsterfucker crew would do this?”

“Who else is there?”

He sighed. “I dunno.”

“They were very angry with you, Will. I would not put it past them.”

“But like…if I died…”

“I would’ve gone into hibernation indefinitely,” Hannibal said, taking his hand.

“I mean, that doesn’t sound like it would benefit them.”

“I’m unsure if they care anymore about me.”

Nigel got up off the floor and stuck two pieces of crumbled up paper on the table. One of them had Will's picture on it, and the other a name.

Durand.

Will swore, getting up from the table, and running from the house.

"Will!"

"Stay here, Fangs!"

"But…"

Nigel rushed out after Will, and Hannibal hated that he could not join him. He sat there, feeling Will's anger rise, and called him on his cellular phone.

"I'm gonna kill her."

"Will, no."

"She tried to kill me! She…"

"Come home to me, Mylimasis," Hannibal whispered, "I need you."

"Hannibal…"

"Shovel Man!"

“STOP CALLING ME THAT!”

Hannibal got up from the table, pacing, and held onto the chair to keep from falling over.

“I need you with me, Will. Please.”

Will let out a sigh. “I’m not gonna let her get away with this.”

“We won’t, mate. I promise. Come home.”

“Ok.”

Hannibal sat down with a groan, shaking, and when Will arrived he pulled him into his arms.

“Do not leave me like that again.”

“I was coming back.”

“Will, I’m very vulnerable right now. I…I need you near me.”

Will paled. “I’m sorry,” he whispered, touching Hannibal’s cheek, “Let’s go to bed. Okay? Nigel…”

“Nigel can get the body out of your place, no problem,” he heard Nigel mumble, “Sure, sure. Just fine, right Shovel Man?”

Will leaned in to whisper in Hannibal's ear. "I hate him."

"No, you don't."

"Okay, I don't but…tell him to stop calling me that."

He kissed Will's cheek. "Nigel, please stop calling Will that."

Nigel chuckled. "Sure, Fangs. Sure. You goin' to ground?"

"Yes."

"I'll clean up here."

Will helped him get up with difficulty, and he turned to smile at him. "Thank you for coming at such short notice, and thank you for being such a good friend."

Nigel smiled. "Anything for you, Fangs."

Will growled. "He's *mine* ."

He put both his hands up. "I'm not gonna fuck him, Sh… *Will* . We're pals now, no sucks or fucks involved."

Hannibal groaned. "Will…"

Will practically lifted him up the stairs, ignoring Nigel, and soon they were in the bedroom again. He sighed, feeling the effects of being awake for so long in light, and closed his eyes.

"I'm sorry for all this," Will whispered, "I…I'm sorry about…"

He pulled Will closer, and buried his face into Will's neck to breathe him in. "I'm not. Thank you for…not letting them win."

Will kissed him softly. "I'm not going anywhere."

I know.

"I'm gonna kill her," Will whispered, "No biting allowed. She's mine."

I can hardly wait to see.

He fell into slumber excited for what the next few hours would bring.

They were going to vanquish their foe together.

Tonight would be the culmination of their union.

I love you, Will.

"I love you, Hannibal."

He fell asleep smiling.

Chapter 13

Will woke up to Hannibal kissing his neck, and sighed leaning in to every touch. He moaned as Hannibal's fangs grazed his skin, and felt his cock harden when Hannibal growled in his ear.

"Good evening."

"Hi," Will said, smiling, "You…seem better."

"Much," he whispered, reaching for Will's pants, "I…"

Will stopped his hand. "Wait."

Hannibal lifted his head, and Will could see his frown clearly in the dark. "What's wrong?"

"We've got work to do."

"But…"

Will reached up to touch his cheek. "Someone tried to kill me this morning, Hannibal. Did you forget about that?"

"No, but…I want to touch you."

Will pulled him down for a kiss. "Later."

They got up out of bed together, and he could feel Hannibal's upset through their bond. Will didn't say anything though, too focused on what they had to do.

Kill Michelle Durand.

He didn't even bother changing his clothes from earlier, and was halfway down the stairs before he realized he hadn't even fed Winston earlier. Will whistled. "Here boy, you hungry? Sorry I…"

"Starved."

Will turned around to glare at Nigel. "What are you still doing here?"

He shrugged. "I didn't have anything to do today, and…the dog needed a walk so…I figured you might need my help. You're welcome about the cleanup by the way."

Will looked around the room and saw that mostly everything was cleaned up though there was still some signs things were the same. The two missing chairs, some decorations gone, and even a few cracks in the walls.

"Nobody asked you to—"

Hannibal stopped on the stairs. "Nigel?"

"Hey Fangs. Sh…Will here is mad I'm offering to help you."

"We don't need you."

"Oh yeah? How are you gonna lure this woman somewhere safe to kill?"

Will frowned.

He hadn't really thought that far ahead.

"I was just gonna go to her house."

Nigel laughed. "You know, *Will* , it's against the law to murder people?"

Hannibal came up to hug Will from behind. "Nigel."

"I'm just sayin! There's a whole lot of fucking monsters who get away with murder because we have a system in place but you're a human mate. They might care about helping you because you're Hannibal's, but I doubt it. You need me."

"I could go to her," Hannibal said, "Pretend to be interested in…"

"The whole block knows you've claimed him, Fangs," Nigel said, "I was outside smoking in and out all day. The looks I got for even bein' here were weird. They're more afraid of him than they are of you."

Will felt an odd satisfaction to hear him say that. "How do you know?"

"Call it a hunch, *Will* ."

He sighed. "Fine. You can…do whatever you have planned."

Nigel smiled. "Thank you, your Majesty. I stayed here five fucking hours for your permission. Thank fuck I got it."

“Nigel…”

He put up both his hands. “Ok, ok, I’ll lay off,” he sighed, “Tell me where this Durand lives and I’ll do the rest. You got a place?”

“A place?”

“The quarry,” Will said, “We will meet you there.”

“Perfect.”

Will watched Nigel go, and waited until he was outside to turn to Hannibal. “What?”

“What is the quarry?”

“It’s an old abandoned rock quarry that’s been around for years. No one goes there anymore, really, cuz there’s been a few mishaps with kids and stuff. The company that owned it left a decade ago and the foreclosure company stopped trying to sell it.”

“No one will see us?”

“No,” Will said, “It’s just…oh. You’re still upset.”

He frowned. “Things could go wrong.”

“Like…?”

“She could be missed.”

“She’s the neighborhood gossip,” Will mumbled, walking into the kitchen to pull a knife out of the drawer, “She’ll be missed.”

“And someone else might know.”

Will froze. “You mean they helped?”

He felt Hannibal’s hand on his lower back. “Yes.”

Will turned and held the knife up with a smile. “If that’s the case, we’ll find them.”

“Will…”

“And if we don’t, they’ll be so scared when she’s missing they’ll never fuck with us again.”

Hannibal put both hands on Will’s face. “This is very important to you.”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because she…they…I just found you,” he said, his voice thick, “And they tried to cut our time short. I want forever with you, Hannibal. Don’t you want that too?”

Hannibal smiled. “Yes, I do.”

“Then, I think it’s time to get rid of the problem.”

He kissed Will softly.

“I think so too.”

They didn’t take much, mostly things to keep a murder scene clean like tarps and even gloves. Will drove them toward the quarry after, the two of them silent, and when they pulled up no one was there to greet them.

Will turned off the lights to wait.

“This will be your first,” Hannibal said, making him frown.

“First what?”

“Kill.”

He smiled. “Second, mate,” he teased, “Remember the wolf?”

“That was in self defense, Will. This will be different.”

Will shook his head. “This is in self defense too. She tried to kill me.”

“I know, but…she’ll be defenseless.”

Will felt his eyes glow. “Good.”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “Will…”

“Forever,” Will said, kissing him softly, “Remember?”

“Yes.”

“This won’t be the last one, I’m sure.”

“No.”

“No one matters but you and me.”

“And your friend Beverly.”

“Her too, I guess,” Will laughed, “But still this…this is…Hannibal…”

Lights made Will stop mid-sentence, and he watched as a truck pulled up to the quarry. They were far enough away they’d go unnoticed, even from here, and as he saw Nigel get out to go right to Michelle Will hissed.

“Once a monster fucker, always a monster fucker.”

“So it seems. Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

Will got our first, the sound of his door making Michelle turn, and when she saw his face she paled. “What’s going on?”

“Hey Michelle,” Will said, smiling, “I’m sure you didn’t expect to see me tonight.”

She looked at Nigel. “Wait, are you with them?”

Nigel put up both his hands. “Not like that, Darlin,” he teased, “Not like that.”

Michelle looked at Hannibal. “I don’t know what’s going on here but—”

“A werewolf broke into our home this morning, Ms. Durand,” Hannibal growled, “And tried to kill my mate.”

“I don’t…”

“They had a picture of me and your last name on them. Nothing else.”

Tears filled her eyes. “I don’t know what you’re trying to say, I’ve never…”

Will rushed toward Michelle fast, grabbing her arms, and the sight of his glowing eyes filled her with a fear he could almost taste. “You were jealous he picked me, Michelle, huh? The quiet, weird loser on the block? Not when *you* were there, so pretty, and so…”

She started to cry, letting out a sob, and Will loosened his grip so she could pull away.

“IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ME!” she sobbed, “Why did you have to shovel his stupid driveway? Why? I WAS SUPPOSED TO…”

Hannibal hissed, his speed so fast Will barely saw him move, and he had her on the ground with a hand around her neck. “I barely even remembered your name,” he growled, “And after this…I never will.”

Her eyes filled with terror as she stared up at them, choking, and Will pulled Hannibal off her. He didn’t need a knife, no, he really didn’t.

He knew that now.

Will grabbed her up by the neck, squeezing with both hands as she writhed. “But I will.”

He watched the life go out of her, not even shedding a tear, and when he let her drop Nigel whistled. “And here I was thinking he’d make a mess.”

Hannibal hugged Will from behind as they watched Nigel take her body, tossing it in the back of his truck.

“I’ll toss this for the other wolves,” he said, “They’ll be glad for it.”

“Thank you.”

“No problem,” Nigel said, smiling, “I had a great time. You really showed me that you’re more than a shovel there, Will.”

Will smiled. “Good.”

He nodded. “Fangs.”

“Nigel.”

“If you need me again, you know where I'll be.”

“Thank you again.”

He looked at Will. “You’re welcome.”

“Thanks.”

They watched the truck pull away and leave them alone as they stood in the middle of the quarry. Will looked up at the sky, the stars so clear here, and smiled.

“It’s a good night.”

“Yes, it is.”

He leaned back against Hannibal. “I love you.”

Hannibal kissed his neck, his fangs grazing Will’s skin. “I love you.”

He sighed. “We’re all alone.”

“Yes.”

“And we’re outside.”

“Yes,” Hannibal growled, nuzzling his neck.

“You wanted to touch me earlier,” Will whispered, “You want to touch me now?”

“Will…”

He arched back, wiggling against Hannibal’s cock, “I’m ready now.”

“People might see us.”

“So?”

“It’s…”

Will pulled away from him, smiling, and Hannibal’s glowing eyes lit up in the dark was so sexy he could hardly breathe. “You caught me once, Dr. Lecter,” he said, teasing, “Think you can catch me again?”

“Will…”

He took off running toward the trees, using every bit of strength their bond gave him. Hannibal was close, he could feel it, but kept on until he was thrown up against a tree. Will moaned as Hannibal growled in his ear. “Do not run from me again.”

“You think *this* is gonna deter me?” he laughed, “I’ve never been more turned on in my entire life.”

“Will…”

“Fuck me, mate. Please?”

Hannibal’s fangs grazed his neck. “Will…”

“Remind me why I chose forever.”

Hannibal growled again, peeling down his jeans, and the sound of his spit slick was the only one he heard before Hannibal thrust inside. Will hissed, groaning, and Hannibal bit into his neck immediately.

The bite was instant pleasure, Will nearly coming, but he fought to keep hard as Hannibal fucked him. He kissed him, turning to taste, and Hannibal’s fangs grazed his tongue with every thrust.

“Don’t stop,” he gasped, “Don’t…”

“Mine,” Hannibal growled again, “My Will…my…”

Will couldn’t keep himself coming when Hannibal bit him again, crying out into the night as waves of pleasure overtook him. Hannibal kept on, growling like a wild animal, and when he finally fell over the edge Will could barely stand.

He held him there, licking Will’s wound that already was starting to close.

“I love you.”

“And I love you.”

Will smiled. “Ready to go home?”

Hannibal kissed him again. “I’m ready.”

He helped Will to the car, even buckling him in, and when they pulled up Will was so exhausted he could hardly stand.

“Will?”

“I think you…had a little too much.”

“I apologize, Will, it’s…”

He smiled. “It’s ok, love,” he teased, “I’ll heal, remember?”

Hannibal frowned. “I could carry you?”

Will nodded. “Please.”

Hannibal lifted him with ease, heading for the door, and when he stopped Will frowned. “What?”

“Nigel left you a gift.”

He turned and saw a snow shovel leaning against the porch with a bow on it.

Will laughed. “Seriously?”

Hannibal growled. “You already have a perfectly good shovel.”

“It’s a joke, Hannibal.”

He walked up and tossed the shovel over the railing. “It’s not a funny one.”

Will laid his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. “Don’t worry, I might like dogs but I’m not into guys who turn into them.”

“Will…”

“Cuz I’m not sure if you know,” he teased, as Hannibal walked them into the door, “There’s a sexy vampire who just moved into the neighborhood.”

Hannibal smiled, shutting the door. “Oh?”

“Mmm hmm,” Will sighed, as he set them on the couch together while Winston ran up for attention.

“And you’re interested in this vampire?”

Will laid his head on Hannibal’s chest with a sigh. “I think maybe I might shovel his driveway and change my life.”

Hannibal kissed his forehead softly. “I think…you might change his life too.”

Will felt tears fill his eyes.

“Sounds like a plan.”

THE END

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